宗像教授伝奇考

【第四集】

むなかたきょうじゅでんきこう

星野之宣
Hoshino Yukinobu

潮漫画文庫

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【第四集】
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インド、中国の原発事故を予言、的中させ、
いま豊川原発を糾弾する
ダーキニー原理教団。
「世界の終わり」を喧伝する妖教祖の正体は？
そしてその恐るべき野望とは？
〝九尾の狐〟に迫る宗像教授に
邪淫の密儀が襲う！

〈殺生石（せっしょうせき）〉より

❖星野之宣❖

一九五四年一月二十九日、北海道帯広市に生まれる。愛知県立芸大中退。
一九七五年「鋼鉄のクイーン」でデビューし、同年「はるかなる朝」で手塚賞受賞。
以来、宇宙、海洋、伝奇、SF等、スケールの大きい本格派SF漫画家として活躍。
徹底した取材と科学的知識に基づく、卓抜なアイディア、壮大で緻密なストーリー、
繊細なペンタッチが多くの読者をひきつけている。
代表作に、「妖女伝説」「2001夜物語」「ヤマタイカ」「ブルーホール」
「未来の二つの顔」「メガクロス」「宗像教授伝奇考」など多数。

BOOK DESIGN❖TAKAHASHI JUNZI

既刊大好評発売中!!

❖星野之宣の本❖

◉希望コミックス
「宗像教授伝奇考」1〜6集・特別版
◉潮漫画文庫
「ヤマタイカ」全5巻

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

VOLUME 4

HOSHINO YUKINOBU

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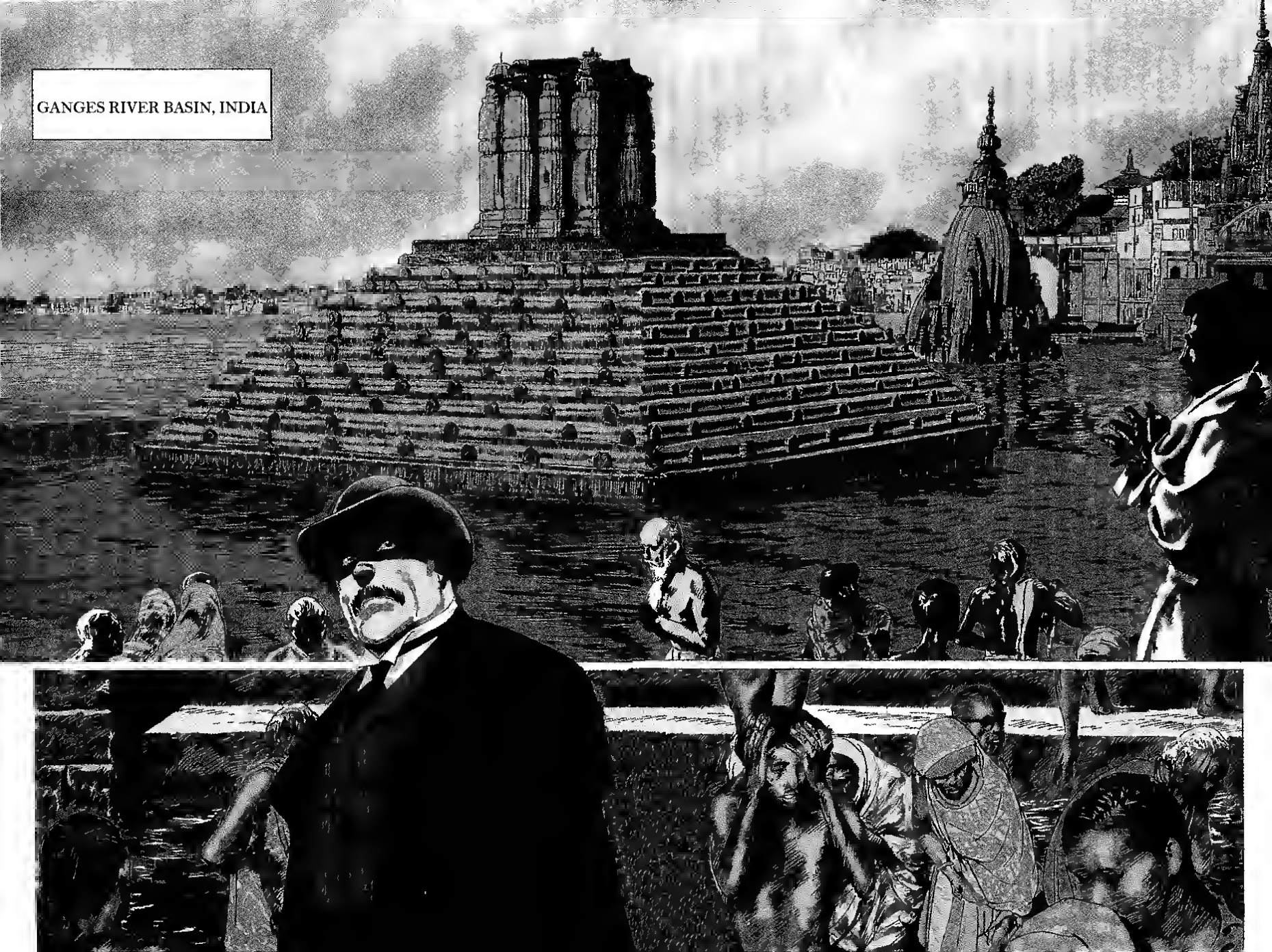
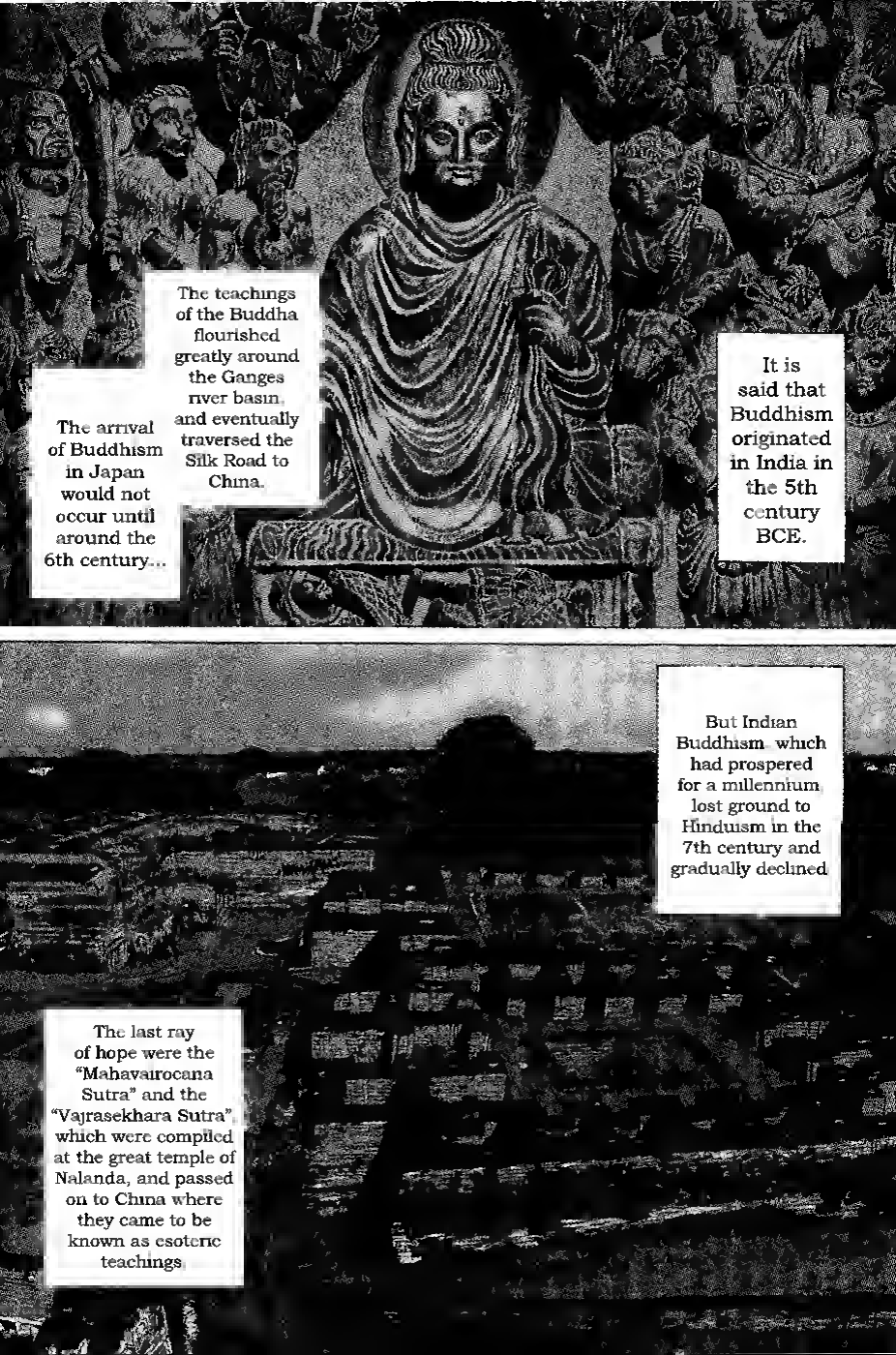
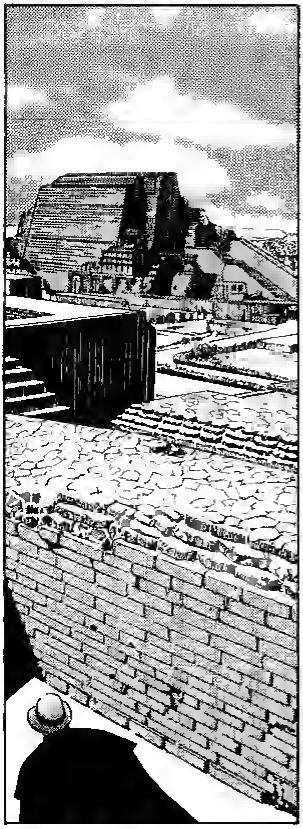
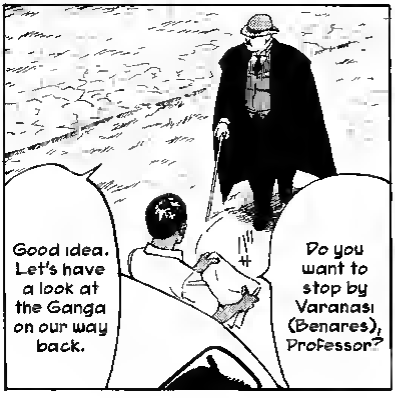
FILE 19:
THE KILLING STONE: PART 1

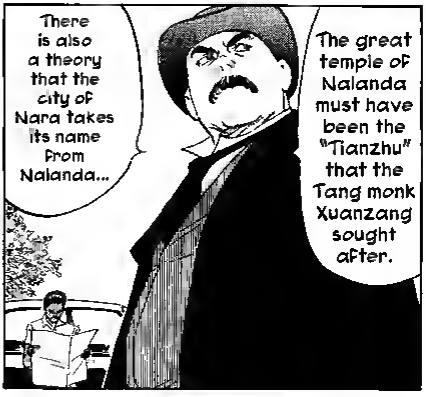

GANGES RIVER BASIN, INDIA


It is said that Buddhism originated in India in the 5th century BCE.
The teachings of the Buddha flourished greatly around the Ganges river basin, and eventually traversed the Silk Road to China.
The arrival of Buddhism in Japan would not occur until around the 6th century...
But Indian Buddhism, which had prospered for a millennium, lost ground to Hinduism in the 7th century and gradually declined.
The last ray of hope were the "Mahavairocana Sutra" and the "Vajrasekhara Sutra", which were compiled at the great temple of Nalanda, and passed on to China where they came to be known as esoteric teachings.



By the time that Kukai had studied these sutras in China and started a unique school of esotericism in Japan, Hinduism had swept over the whole of India, and Buddhism had been utterly destroyed...


Good idea. Let's have a look at the Ganga on our way back.
Do you want to stop by Varanasi (Benares), Professor?

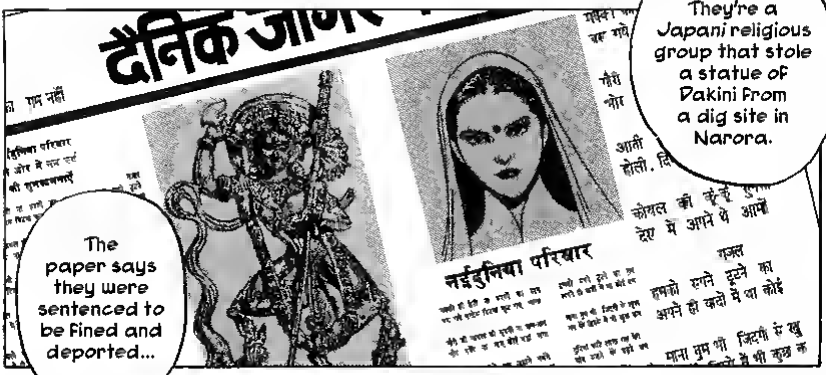

There is also a theory that the city of Nara takes its name from Nalanda...
The great temple of Nalanda must have been the "Tianzhu" that the Tang monk Xuanzang sought after.

In fact, there is the Allahabad Nuclear Power Plant just upstream on the Ganga
India built an atomic bomb without any other nation's help, and we built plenty of nuclear power plants
Yes, there are many poor people in India, but we also have very rich people, and we have technology
Oh, a nuclear power plant...?

.....
Cows are sacred beasts in India. We all wait until they move.
By the way, isn't there anything you can do about these cows?

HURRY!

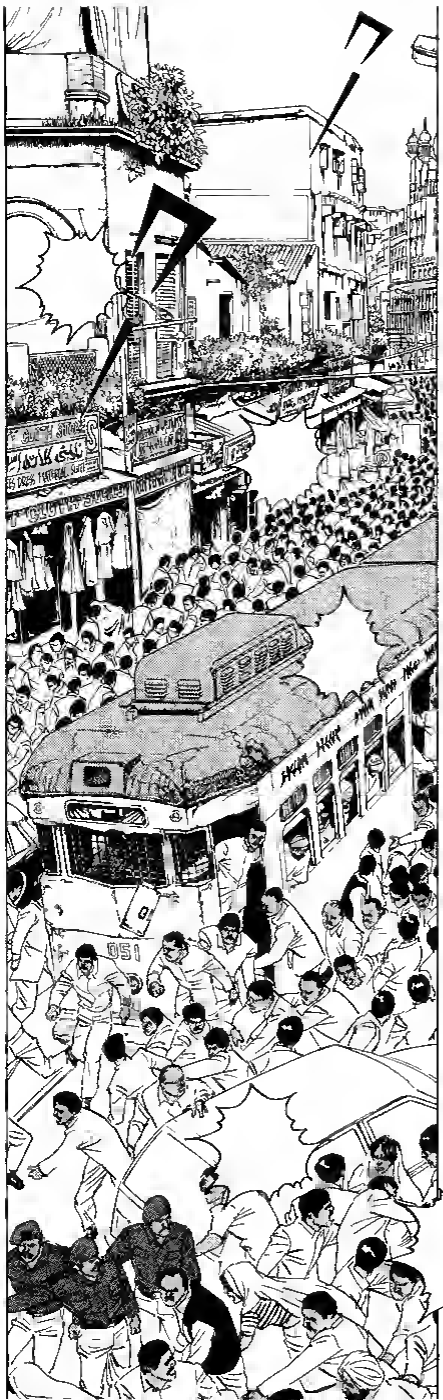
THOSE BIT-CHES!
That was Japan-ese...
They may be the Japani that caused the incident in the papers!
Inci-dent?

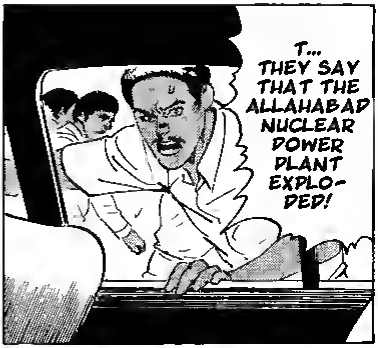

दैनिक जागरण
नईदुनिया परिवार
They're a Japani religious group that stole a statue of Dakini from a dig site in Narora.
The paper says they were sentenced to be fined and deported...

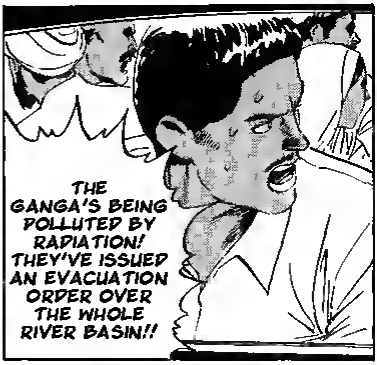
Religious group...? Dakini?

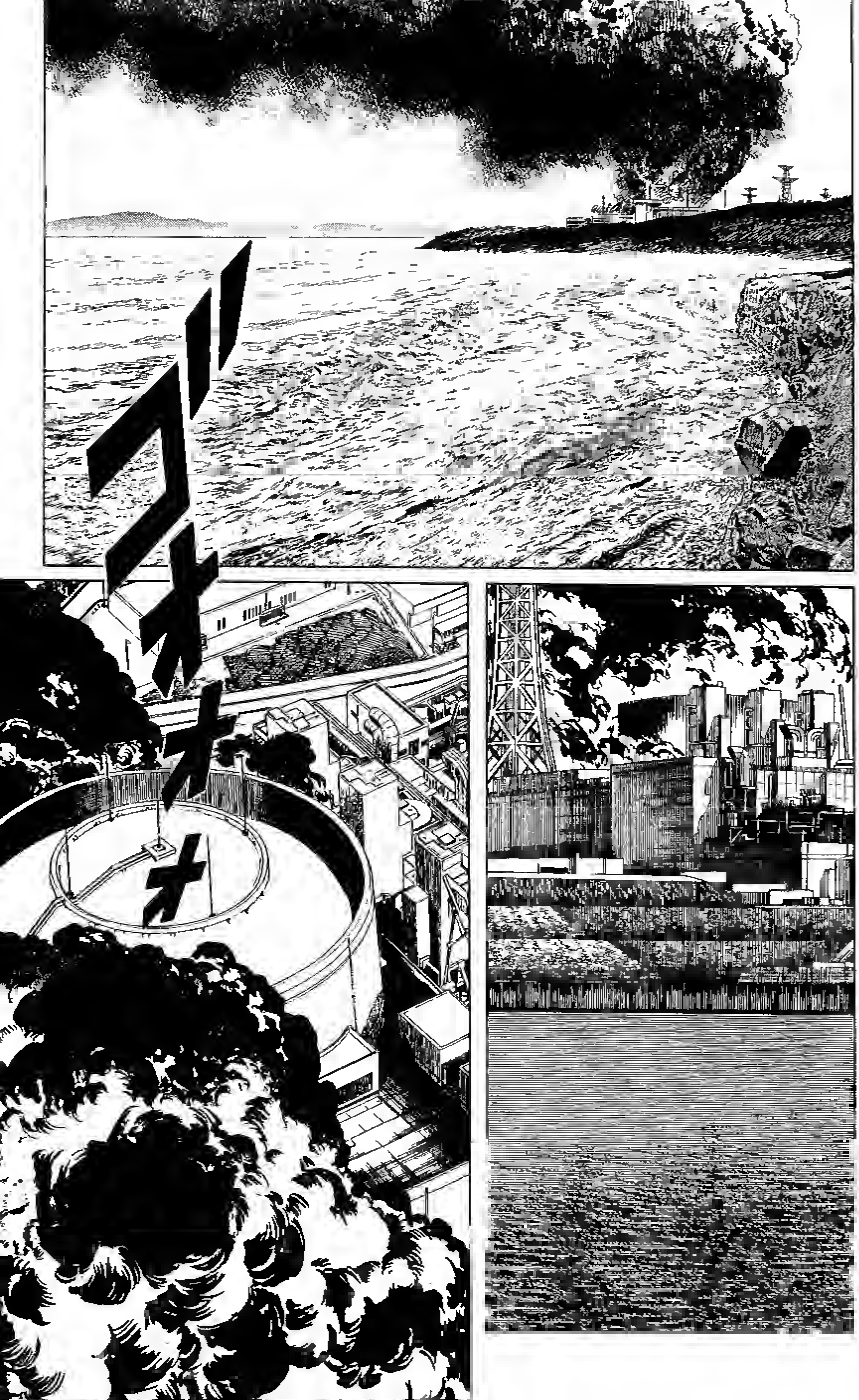
They set up a branch here in India and passed a bunch of flyers around, all while saying the end of the world was coming. Hehehe...
Huh?

What's all the commotion?
Something's wrong. I'll go ask around.
47362




T... THEY SAY THAT THE ALLAHABAD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT EXPLODED!


THE GANGA'S BEING POLLUTED BY RADIATION! THEY'VE ISSUED AN EVACUATION ORDER OVER THE WHOLE RIVER BASIN!!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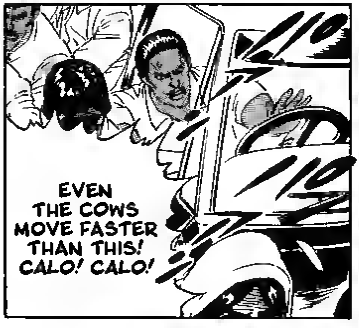
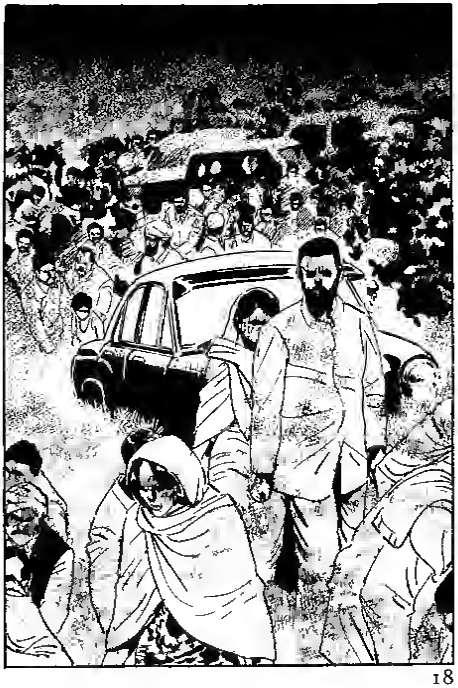
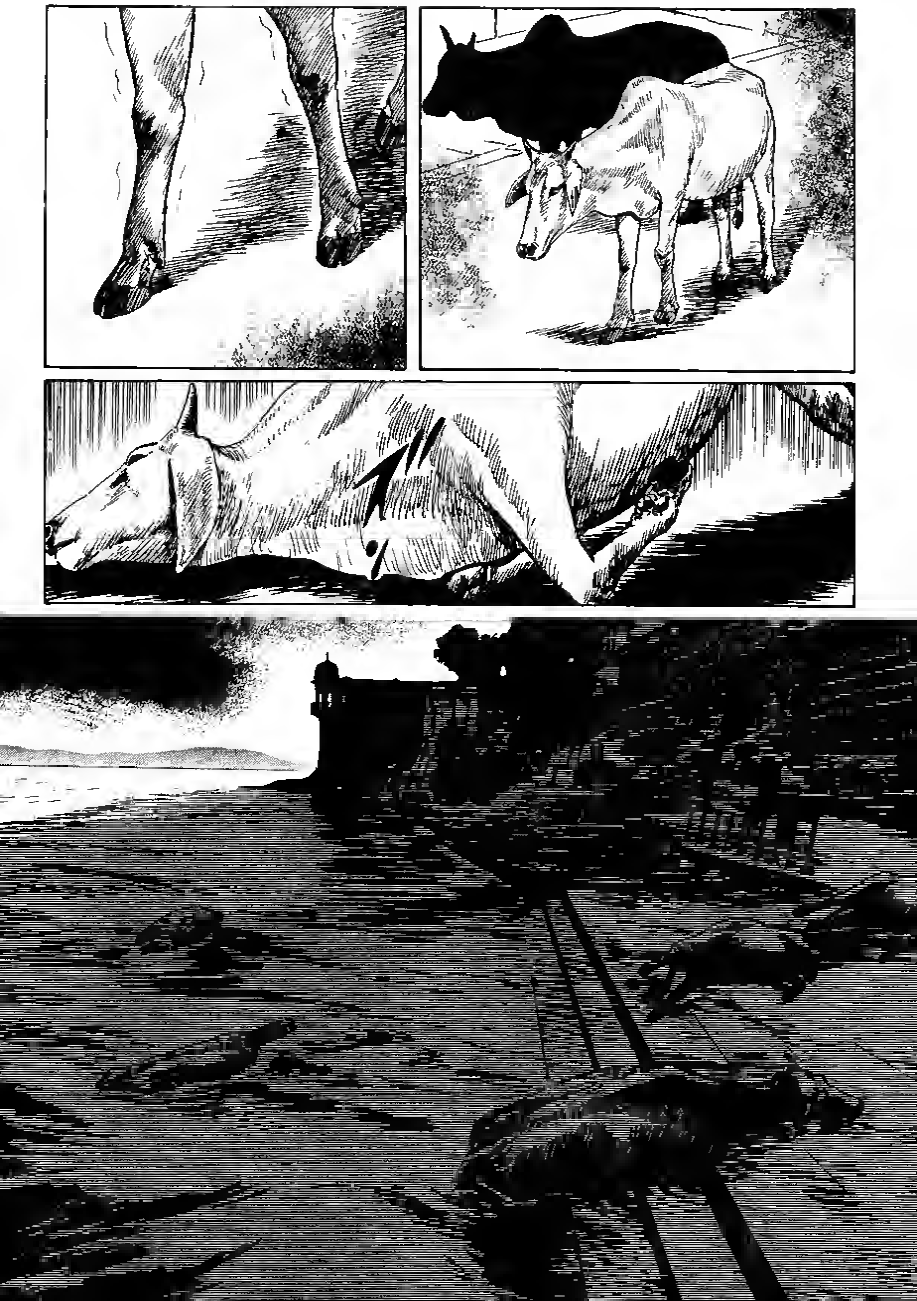
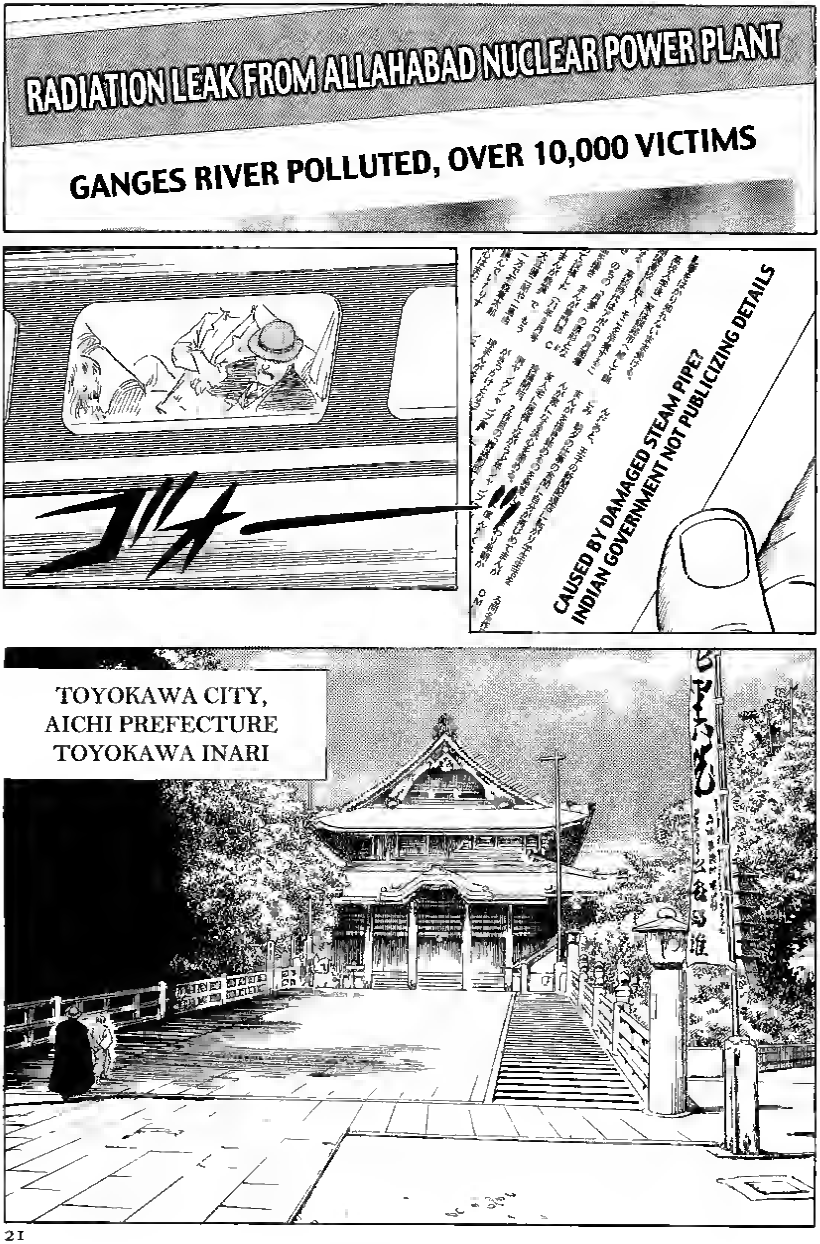

EVEN THE COWS MOVE FASTER THAN THIS! CALO! CALO!

.....





Damage from Indian
Nuclear Accident Spreads
Refugees evacuating from Ganges River (Bengal, India)

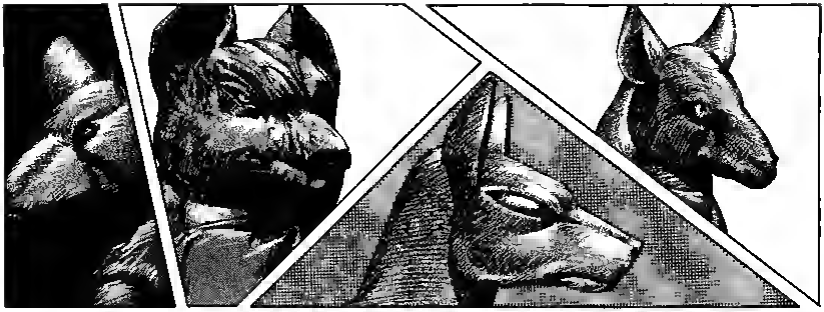

RADIATION LEAK FROM ALLAHABAD NUCLEAR POWER PLANT
GANGES RIVER POLLUTED, OVER 10,000 VICTIMS
CAUSED BY DAMAGED STEAM PIPE?
INDIAN GOVERNMENT NOT PUBLICIZING DETAILS
TOYOKAWA CITY,
AICHI PREFECTURE
TOYOKAWA INARI

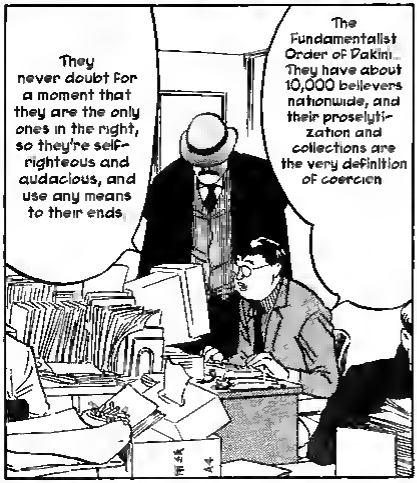
You want to know about Dakini?
I was spending some time touring the Buddhist ruins... By the way...
Oh, you were in India...
but these were substituted for foxes in Japan, where there are no jackals.
One theory is that the Hindu Dakini was a deification of the carrion-eating jackals...
It's true that the deity enshrined here at Toyokawa Inari is the goddess Dakini-Shinten...
And Inari refers to foxes. Dakini and foxes have been inseparable since time immemorial, though the reason is not fully clear.
But the truth is that Dakini was a fertility goddess of the harvest, and this image may have been tied to Inari, who represents rice-farming.

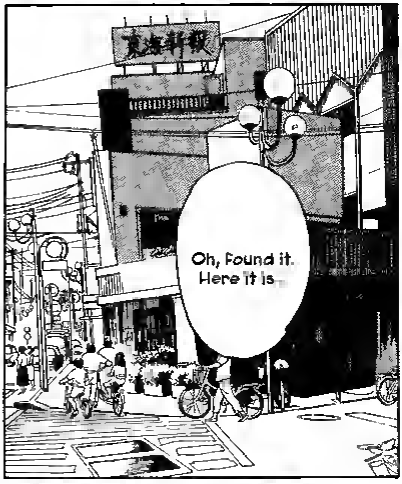
At the very least, you will see what kind of goddess Dakini was by looking at this Fox Shrine
Thousands have people have offered foxes to the shrine, praying for good harvests and prosperity.
狐塚
WHAT'S THIS...!?
AH...

Someone must have broken this with a hammer overnight. What a distasteful prank...
120
131
Professor Munakata...?

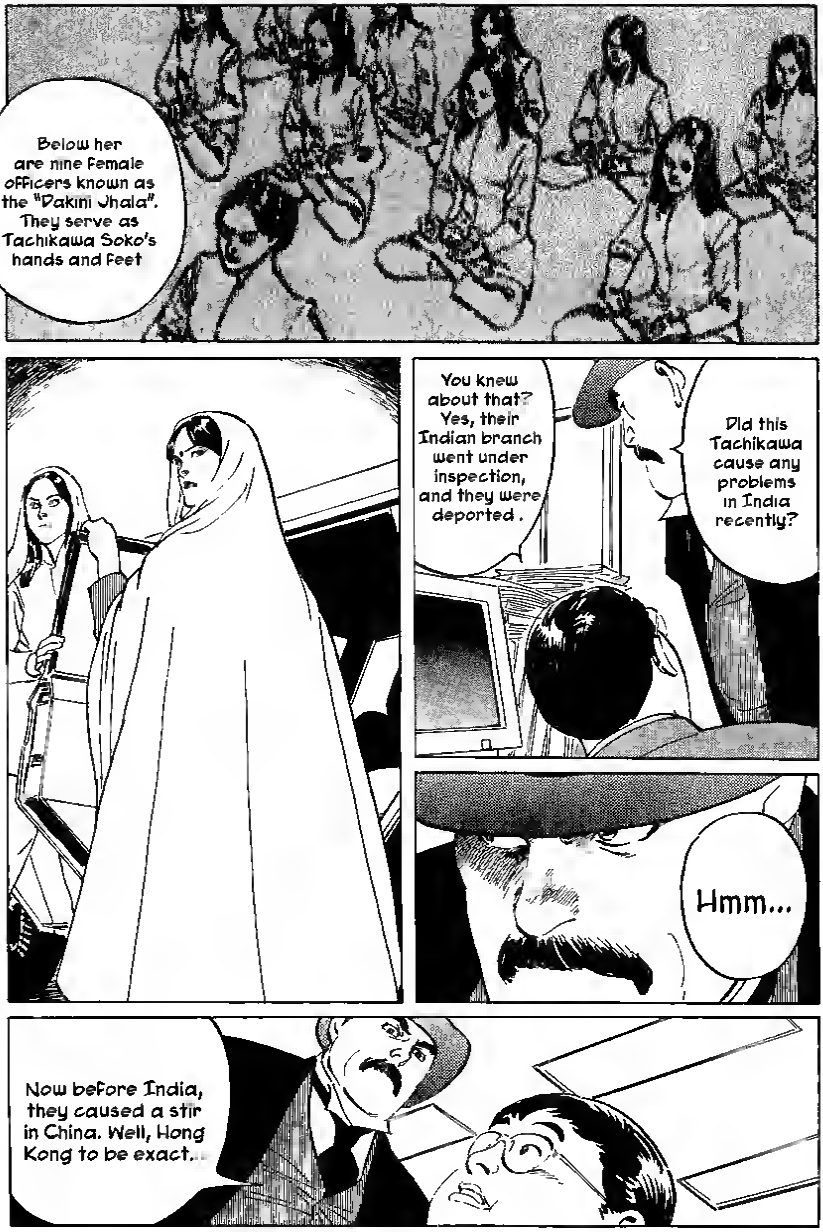
Now when was it we met ..
Well, isn't it a small world... Were you here by coincidence?
Hmm... Are there any leads to the culprit?
Do you remember me? I'm Asai From the Tokai News! I've met you once before for an interview!
Oh, it's you!
Fundamentalist Order of Dakini!?
..Have you ever heard of the "Fundamentalist Order of Dakini", Professor?
Well, they don't have any evidence, but there's been a strange group that's been prowling around here as of late.
This may have been an act of their harassment...
They're a new religious sect that worships the Hindu goddess Dakini, and they've apparently boasted that they'd crush the fraudulent Japanese Faiths, especially that of Dakini-ten.



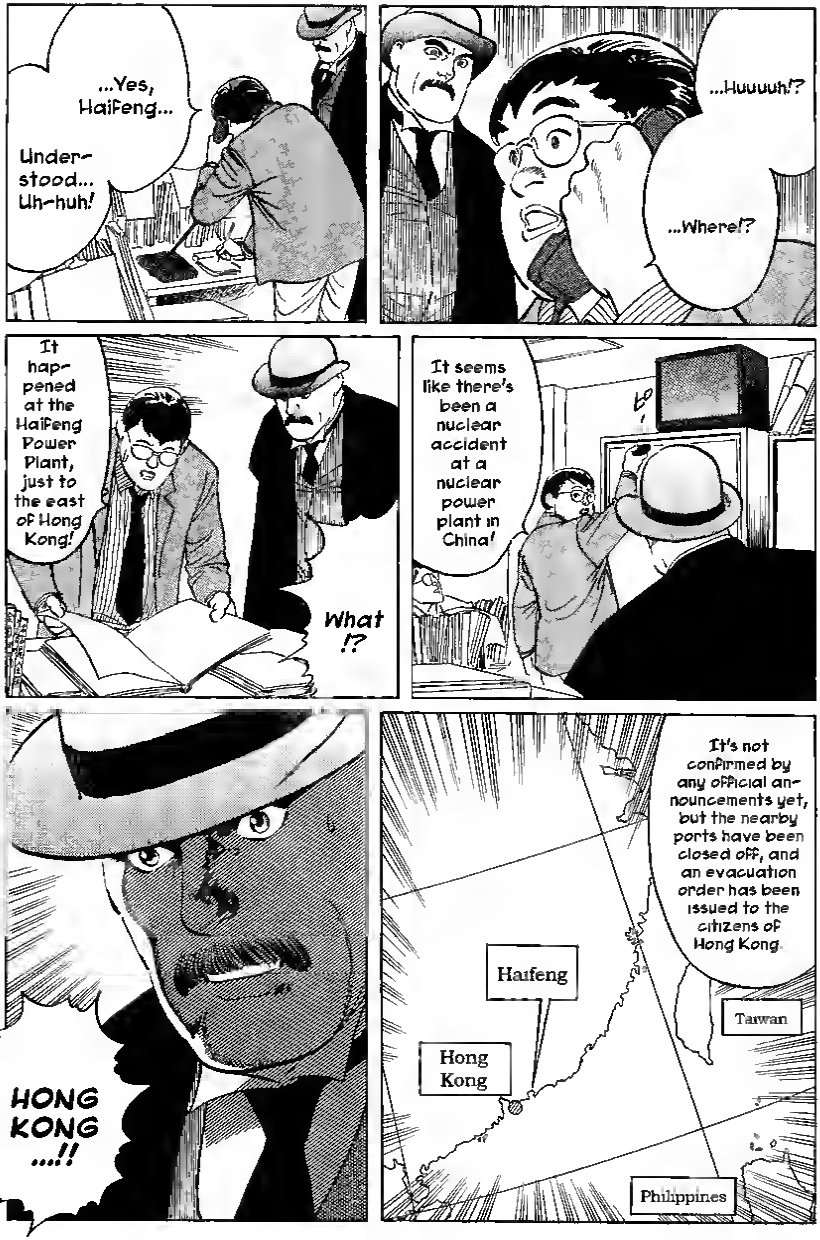

They never doubt for a moment that they are the only ones in the right, so they're self-righteous and audacious, and use any means to their ends.
The Fundamentalist Order of Dakini... They have about 10,000 believers nationwide, and their proselytization and collections are the very definition of coercion


東海新報
Oh, Found it. Here it is.

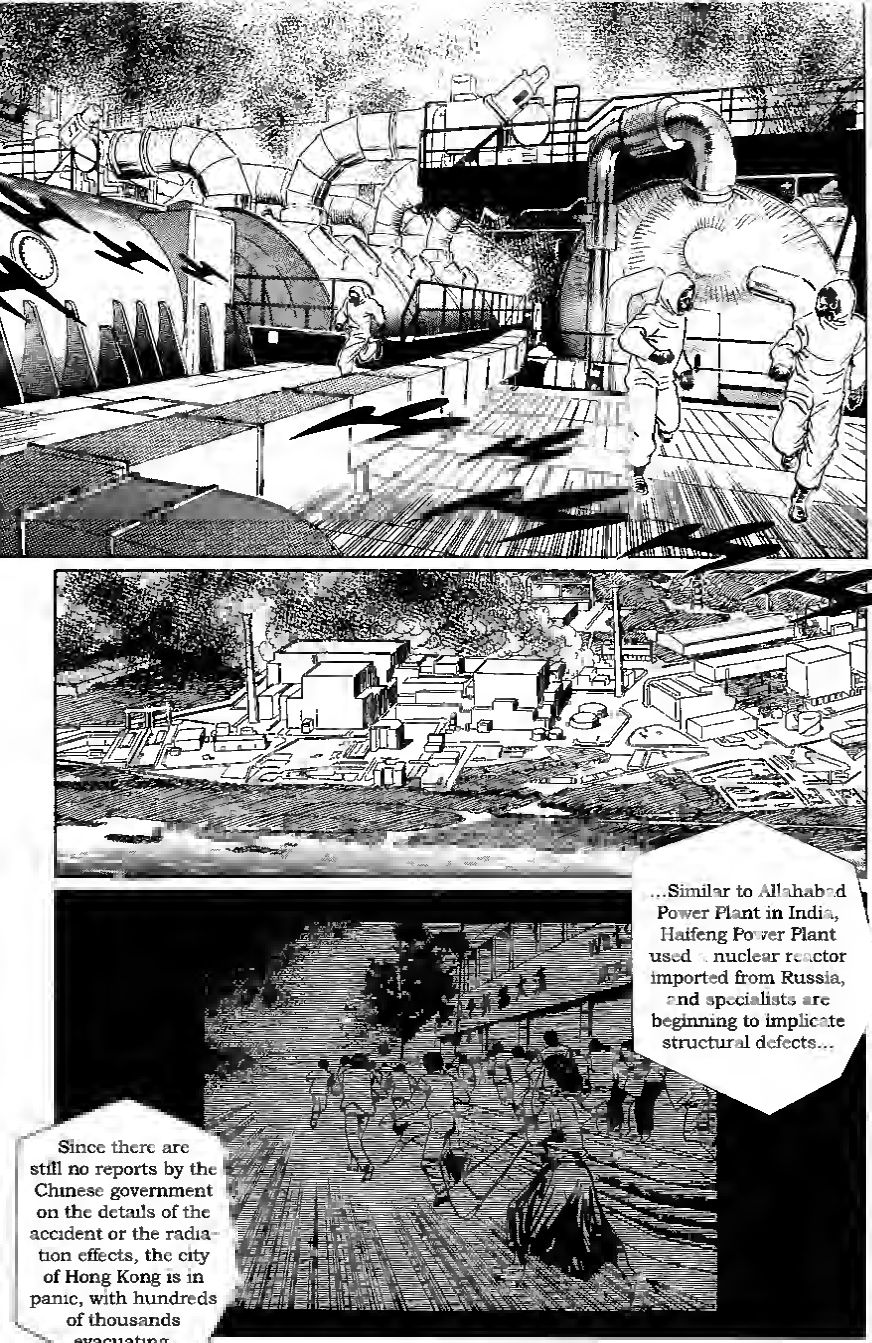
ファイル 編集 表示 ラベル 特別
ダーキニー原理教団
1項目
105 2 MB 使用
教祖
立川 澄子 (年齢 経歴 不詳)
信者数
推定 1万人
本部所在地
静岡県 富士宮市
備考
入信勧誘をめぐって各地でトラブル多発。
支部周辺の住民との立ち退き裁判進行中。
Naturally, they've caused a string of trouble throughout the nation, and they're on the verge of being a social problem
This is their founder, Tachikawa Soko. Her true identity is unknown..


Below her are nine female officers known as the "Dakini Jhala". They serve as Tachikawa Soko's hands and feet
You knew about that? Yes, their Indian branch went under inspection, and they were deported.
Did this Tachikawa cause any problems in India recently?
Hmm...
Now before India, they caused a stir in China. Well, Hong Kong to be exact...

When that happened, Tachikawa Soko gathered the media and staged a major protest, which became the topic for countless variety shows.
They had a branch in Hong Kong, but after the transfer of sovereignty, the Chinese government slowly put pressure on them until they disbanded.
A GREAT MISFORTUNE WILL BEFALL HONG KONG, AS I HAVE PROPHESIED!
THIS IS RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION! THIS IS A CHALLENGE TO DAKINI!
Hello, you've reached the Tokai News, Toyokawa branch...
プルルルル


...Yes, Haifeng...
Under-stood... Uh-huh!
...Huuuuh!?
...Where!?
It hap-pened at the Haifeng Power Plant, just to the east of Hong Kong!
What !?
It seems like there's been a nuclear accident at a nuclear power plant in China!
HONG KONG ....!!
It's not confirmed by any official an-nouncements yet, but the nearby ports have been closed off, and an evacuation order has been issued to the citizens of Hong Kong.
Haifeng
Hong Kong
Taiwan
Philippines

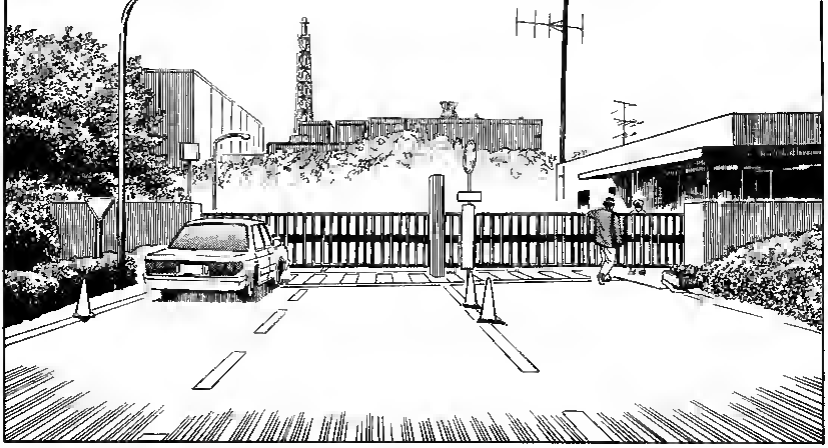
pierre balmain
LUXMAN
REGENT PHOTO &
VISION
OPTICAL CO.
MADE TO ORDER
IN 6 HOURS
JEWELLERY CO.
RETAIL & WHOLESALE
ALL KINDS OF BUDDHA
STATUES & THANGKAS
FOR SALE
LUXMAN
HARRY
3-6TH FL

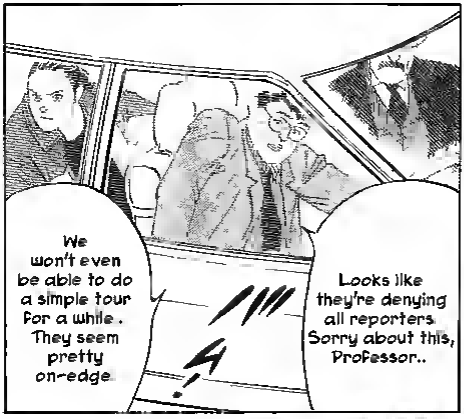

...Similar to Allahabad Power Plant in India, Haifeng Power Plant used a nuclear reactor imported from Russia, and specialists are beginning to implicate structural defects...
Since there are still no reports by the Chinese government on the details of the accident or the radiation effects, the city of Hong Kong is in panic, with hundreds of thousands evacuating

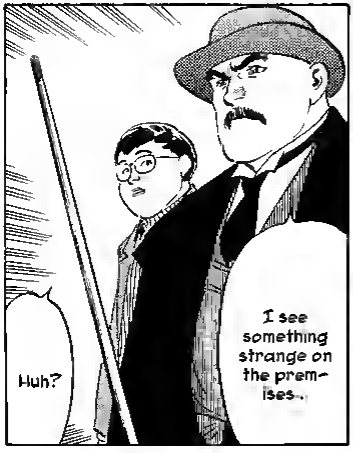
社会
Looks like it's not the worst-case scenario, but it's unnerving that it's so close to Japan...
Oh, you're here, Midorikawa! I figured you'd come when you heard the news!
Toyokawa Nuclear Power Plant—!?
Well, I won't know until we get there... Why don't you come with us, Professor Munakata? It's not a place just anyone can get into
You're going to report on Toyokawa Nuclear Power Plant, aren't you? Then let me come with you!

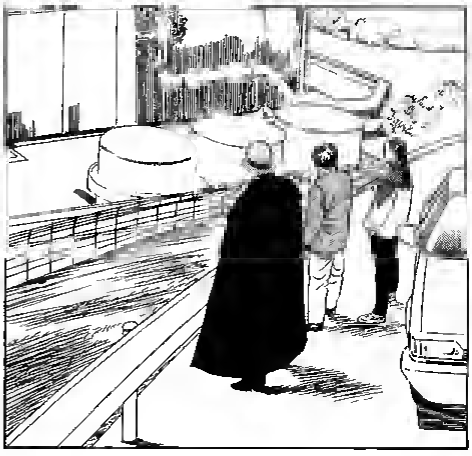
There've been a number of protests from the local residents and people in the fishing industry... And Midorikawa here is an anti-nuclear power activist to the side of his studies.
It's a nuclear power plant that was just recently completed on the northern end of Atsumi Peninsula, overlooking Mikawa Bay.
But they've insisted that Japanese nuclear reactors have a different structure and safety systems from India and China's, so it's completely safe.
Naturally, it's our duty as news reporters to interview the power plant and have them respond to these concerns...
People are anxious after what happened in India, and now China. They're worried that an accident like that may happen here...
Oh?
We'll try coming in from the front door, but being the palaces of secretiveness they are, they could turn us away at the gates.
. What's that?

Some rumors say it's to keep the exposed residents in.
.....
That's a quarantine gate. They claim it's to prevent anyone coming near the plant if it does start leaking radiation, but don't you think it's a little too ostentatious?

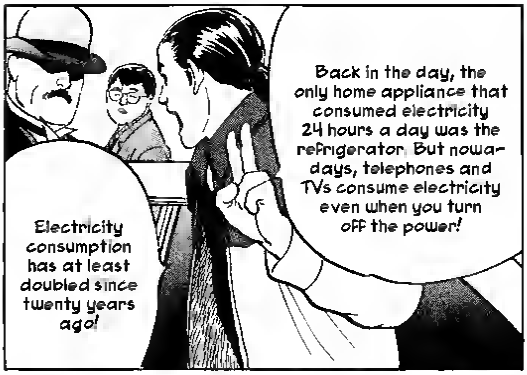



We won't even be able to do a simple tour for a while. They seem pretty on-edge.
Looks like they're denying all reporters. Sorry about this, Professor..

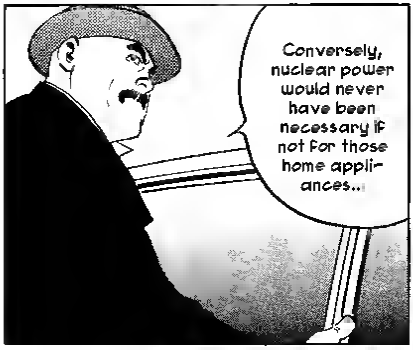

Huh?
I see something strange on the premises..

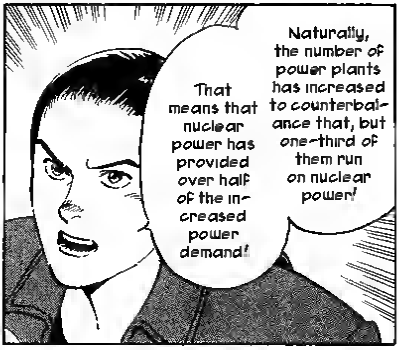


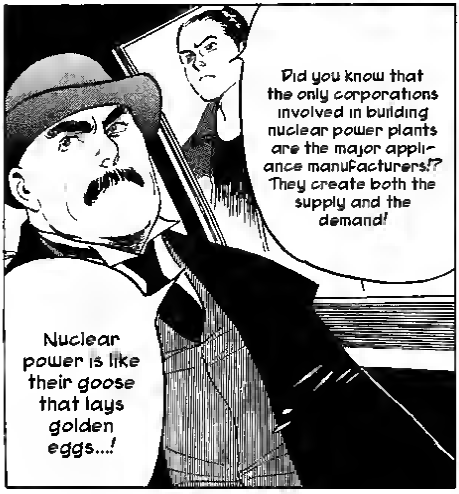
But what would that be doing in a power plant...?
I can't tell for sure from here, but there seems to be a small shrine or stone Dosojin over there.
Well, we'll have to look into it some other time.
But whatever the case, they can't claim perfect safety when they're dealing with uranium and plutonium, Professor
Their claims that this is "clean energy" to replace oil is a boldfaced lie. Everything involved in the transport, maintenance, and waste disposal of uranium makes use of gasoline engines...So if oil goes, so does nuclear power!
You can shield it or wash it away, but you can't just get rid of it!
From the moment it's excavated, uranium ore keeps emitting radiation into the atmosphere for centuries...

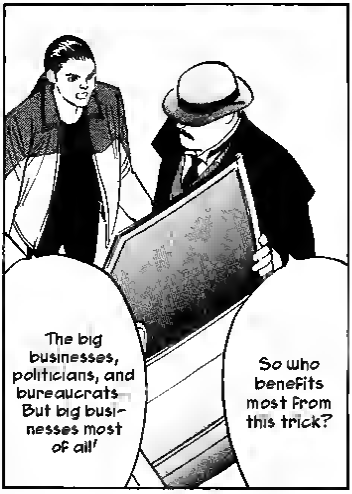

Back in the day, the only home appliance that consumed electricity 24 hours a day was the refrigerator. But nowadays, telephones and TVs consume electricity even when you turn off the power!
Electricity consumption has at least doubled since twenty years ago!

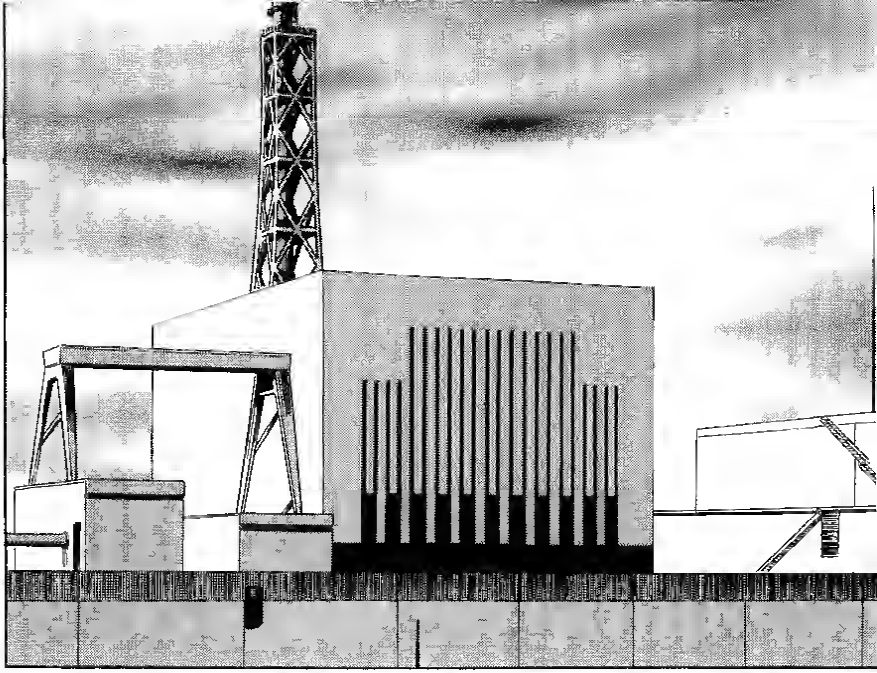
I know, Midorikawa. I promise you that I'll write an article that raises the issue

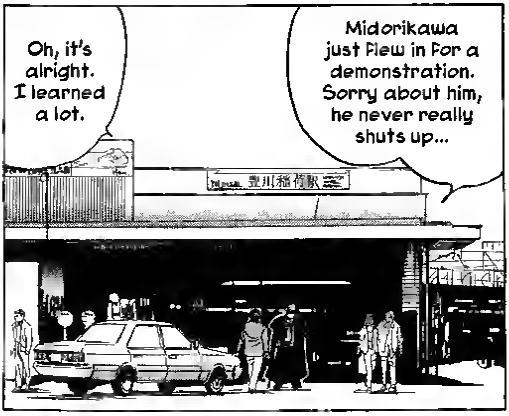

Conversely, nuclear power would never have been necessary if not for those home appliances...

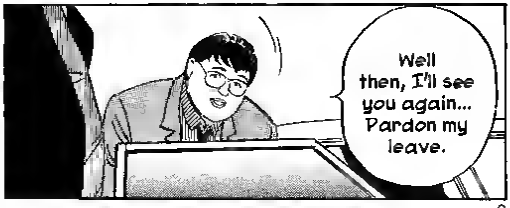

Naturally, the number of power plants has increased to counterbalance that, but one-third of them run on nuclear power!
That means that nuclear power has provided over half of the increased power demand!

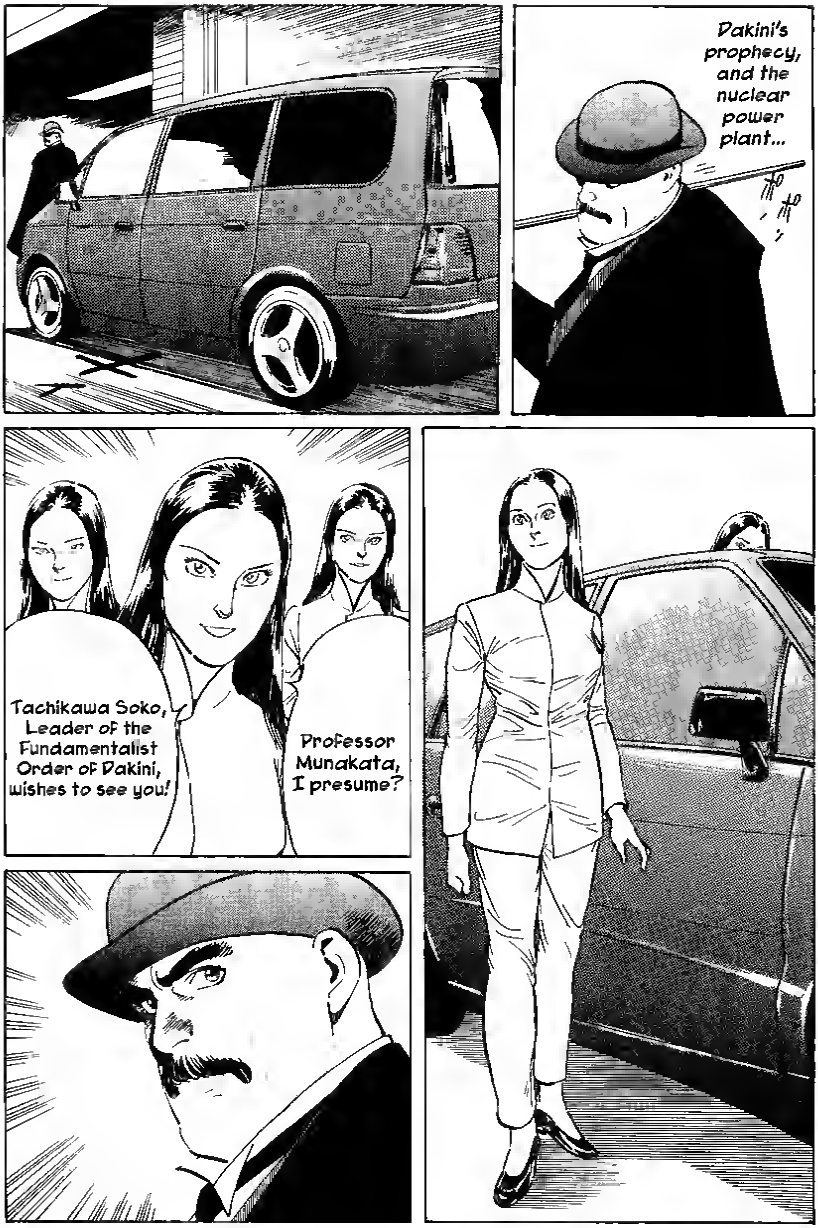

Did you know that the only corporations involved in building nuclear power plants are the major appliance manufacturers!? They create both the supply and the demand!
Nuclear power is like their goose that lays golden eggs...!


So who benefits most from this trick?
The big businesses, politicians, and bureaucrats... But big businesses most of all!

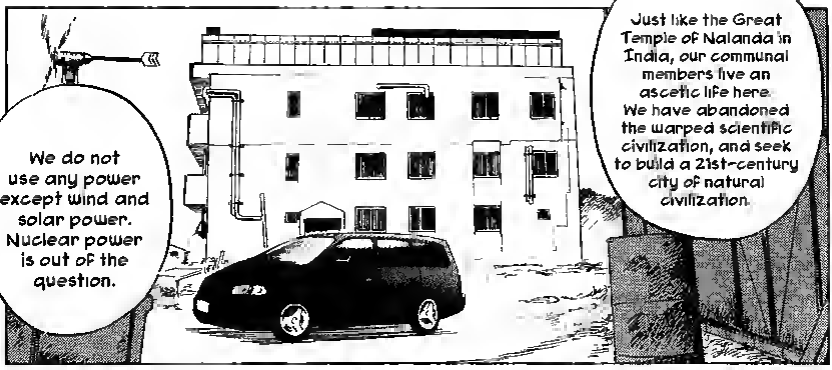


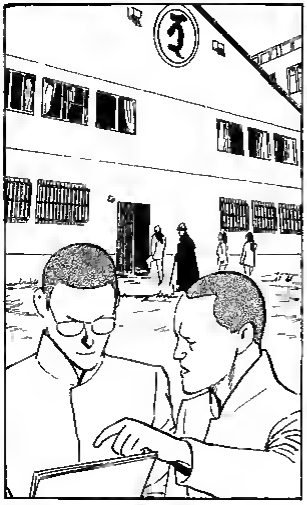

Oh, it's alright. I learned a lot.
Midorikawa just flew in for a demonstration. Sorry about him, he never really shuts up...

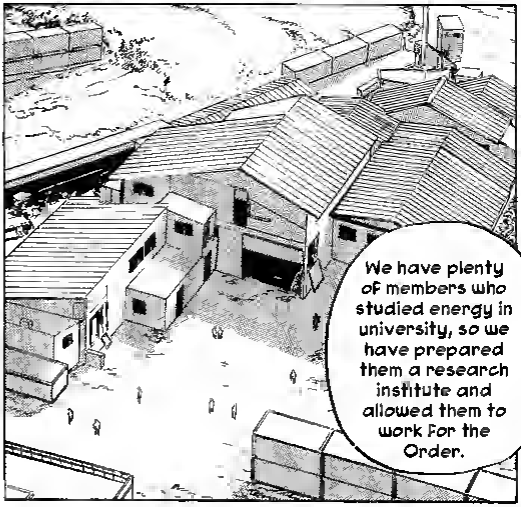

Well then, I'll see you again... Pardon my leave.


Dakini's prophecy, and the nuclear power plant...
Tachikawa Soko, Leader of the Fundamentalist Order of Dakini, wishes to see you!
Professor Munakata, I presume?

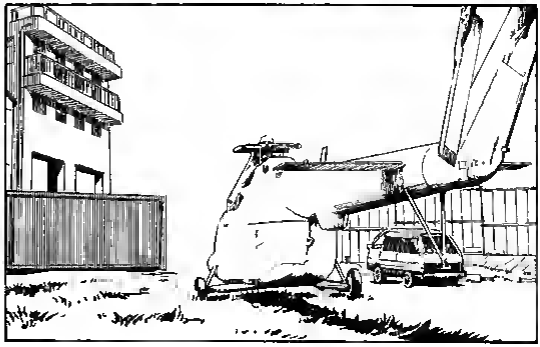
I will take you to our headquarters in the suburbs of Fujinomiya, Shizuoka.
I just happened to see you on my way home from the Nagoya branch, so I called the Leader right away.
I've seen your face before in magazines. You're the folklore professor, aren't you?

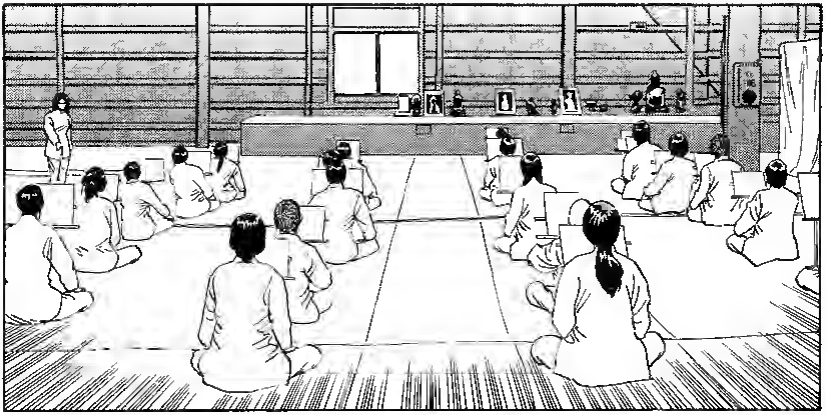

We do not use any power except wind and solar power. Nuclear power is out of the question.
Just like the Great Temple of Nalanda in India, our communal members live an ascetic life here. We have abandoned the warped scientific civilization, and seek to build a 21st-century city of natural civilization.




We have plenty of members who studied energy in university, so we have prepared them a research institute and allowed them to work for the Order.

You even have a helicopter... Now is that necessary for a natural civilization?





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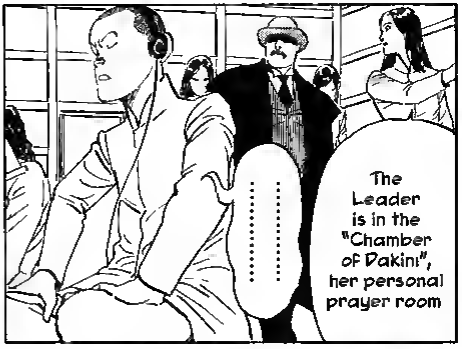
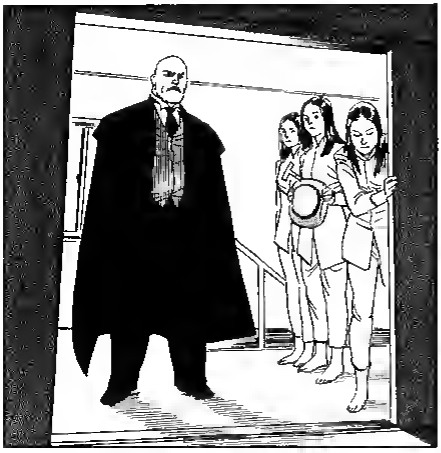
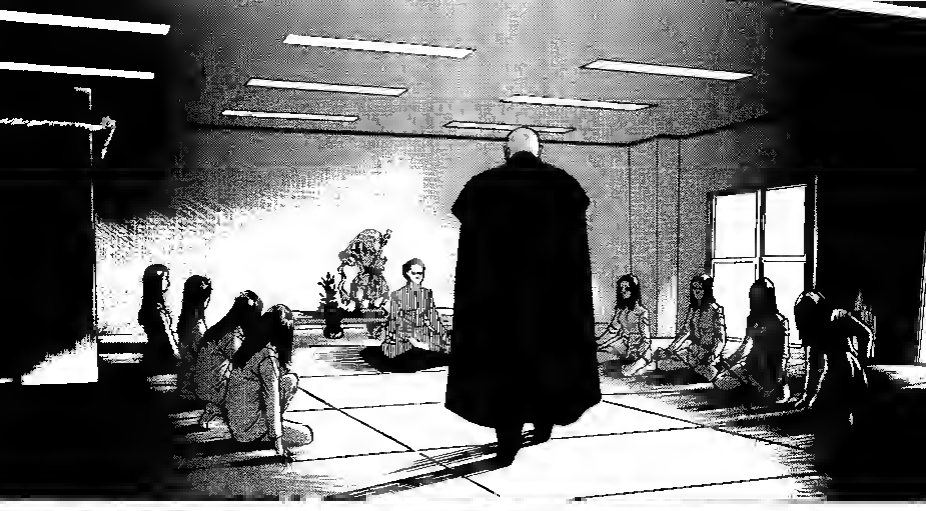
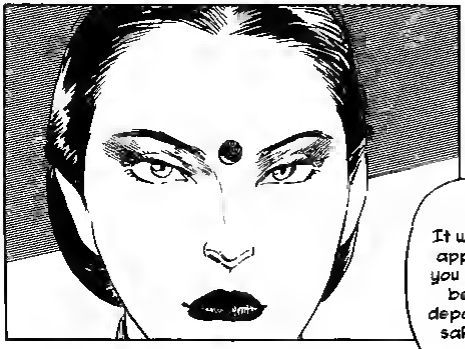
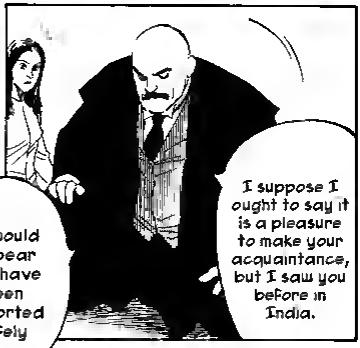

.....
The Leader is in the "Chamber of Dakini", her personal prayer room



I must ask that you leave your hat and cane with us when you meet with the Leader.

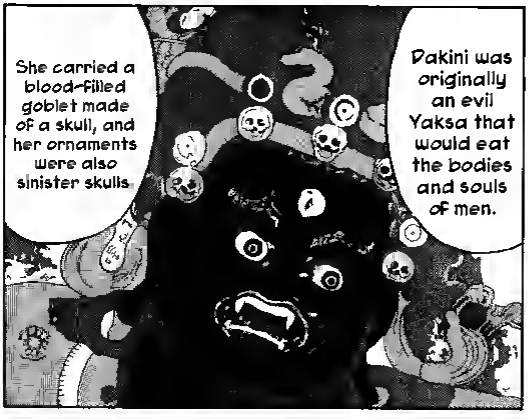


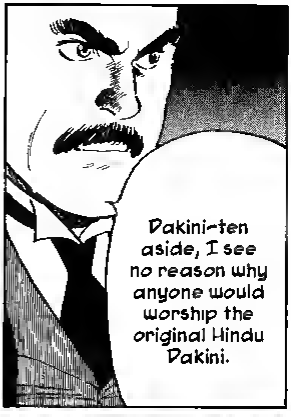



I suppose I ought to say it is a pleasure to make your acquaintance, but I saw you before in India.
It would appear you have been deported safely

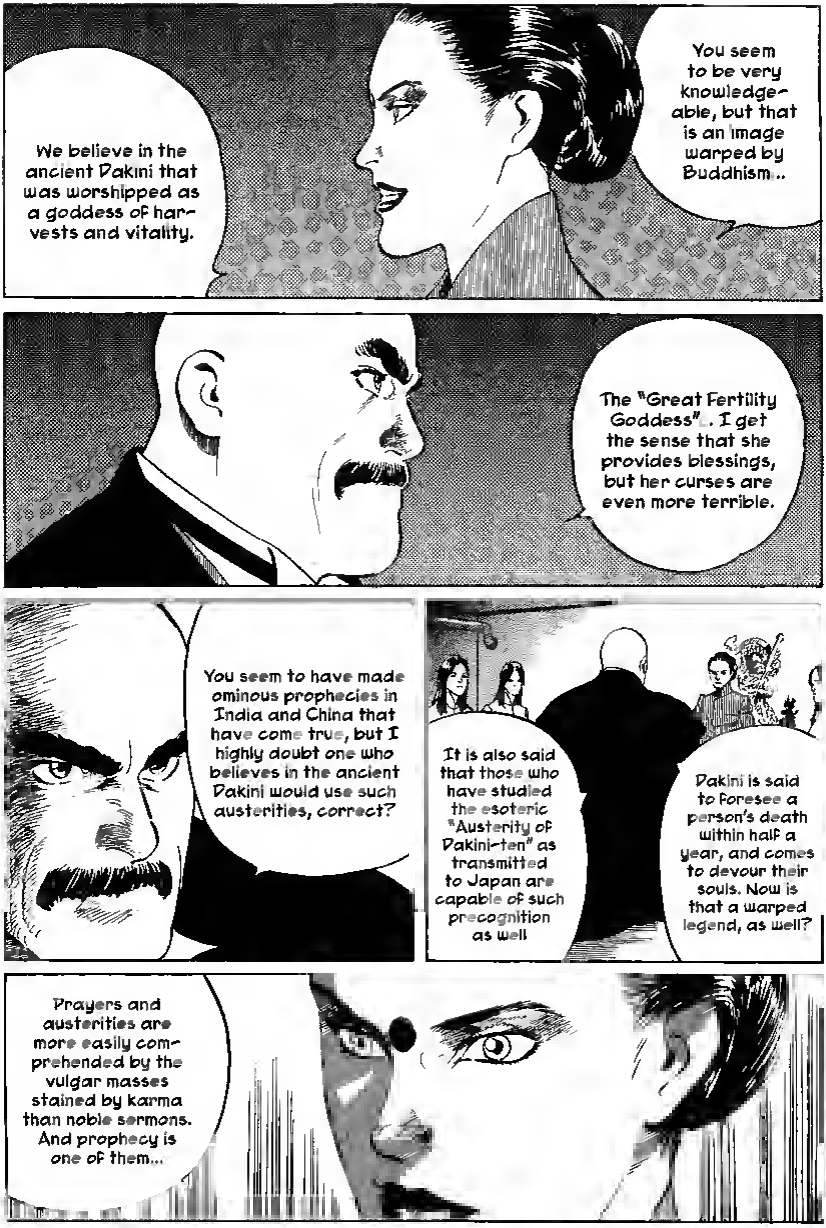
We are the only legitimate order in the world that worships Dakini, after all...

Is that the idol that you stole?
We pulled a few strings and brought it back with us


She carried a blood-filled goblet made of a skull, and her ornaments were also sinister skulls.
Dakini was originally an evil Yaksa that would eat the bodies and souls of men.


Dakini-ten aside, I see no reason why anyone would worship the original Hindu Dakini.

And that her terrible image is represented by, for instance, the Hannya mask
Some say that she was defeated by Mahakala, also known as Daikokuten, and converted to Buddhism

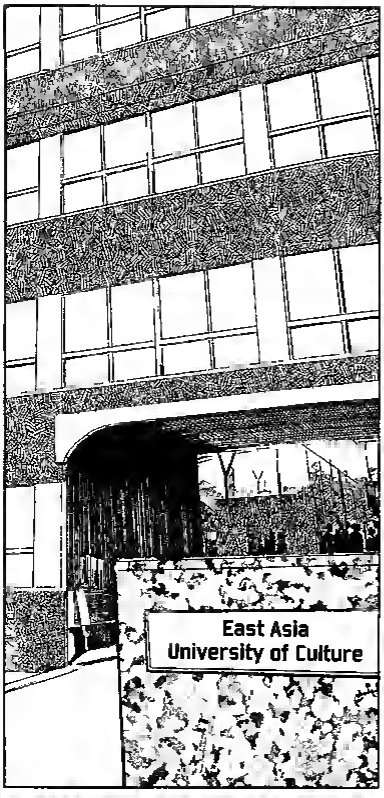

You seem to be very knowledgeable, but that is an image warped by Buddhism...
We believe in the ancient Dakini that was worshipped as a goddess of harvests and vitality.
The "Great Fertility Goddess"... I get the sense that she provides blessings, but her curses are even more terrible.
You seem to have made ominous prophecies in India and China that have come true, but I highly doubt one who believes in the ancient Dakini would use such austerities, correct?
It is also said that those who have studied the esoteric "Austerity of Dakini-ten" as transmitted to Japan are capable of such precognition as well
Dakini is said to foresee a person's death within half a year, and comes to devour their souls. Now is that a warped legend, as well?
Prayers and austerities are more easily comprehended by the vulgar masses stained by karma than noble sermons. And prophecy is one of them...

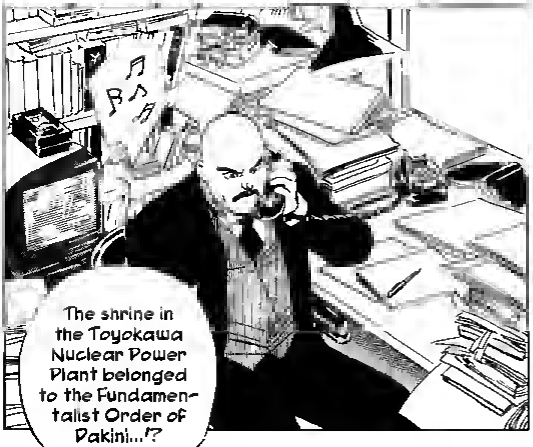
This is the warning of Dakini!
The Order has long since railed against the dangers of nuclear power!
We can see that reliance on wicked energy will one day lead to failure!
Scientific civilization will one day choke itself out by air pollution, global warming, and radiation!
They will rot and perish at the hands of the venoms they themselves wrought!

And the rot will continue to spread forth without end! We must protect the remnant before everything falls to the rot! We must cut away the rot and nourish the pure! We must convert the rotten and festering land into fields, and build a kingdom!
Om Dakini sahahara kati svaha!
Om Dakini sahahara kati svaha!
RETURN TO NATURAL CIVILIZATION! LIVE WITH THE SUN, THE WIND, THE EARTH, AND THE GRACE OF THE GREAT FERTILITY GODDESS DAKINI!

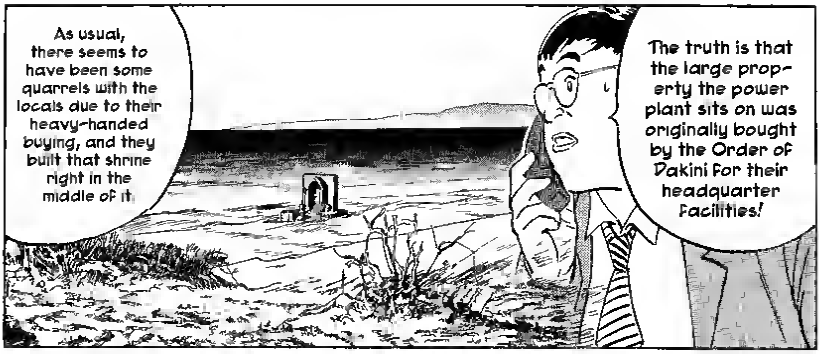
ONLY THOSE WHO FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS AND CONTINUE THEIR ASCETIC DEVOTION WILL SURVIVE! THEY WILL SURVIVE EVEN AFTER THE ROTTEN HAVE PERISHED! THEY WILL SURVIVE FOR ALL ETERNITY!!
THERE WILL BE A MILLENNIAL KINGDOM OF ONLY THE CHOSEN! A SHANGRI-LA! DAKINI'S SHANGRI-LA!!

Thanks for the offer, but I've received an oracle of my own, and I must decline.
The Leader would very much appreciate it if you endorsed us and cooperated in our study of Dakini.
There is a saying that the Dakini Jhala are terrifying women who lead male pilgrims to pleasure, only to sacrifice them.
Incidentally, I assume you are the nine women known as the Dakini Jhala? I only saw eight of you, though...
Do we seem that way to you?
The last one has the responsibility of assisting the followers' ascetic practice.

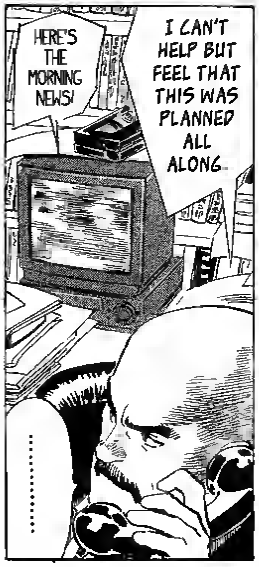

East Asia
University of Culture


The shrine in the Toyokawa Nuclear Power Plant belonged to the Fundamentalist Order of Dakini...!?

Oh, it's you, Asai. Thanks for your assistance the other day.
Hmm... What?


As usual, there seems to have been some quarrels with the locals due to their heavy-handed buying, and they built that shrine right in the middle of it.
The truth is that the large property the power plant sits on was originally bought by the Order of Dakini for their headquarter facilities!

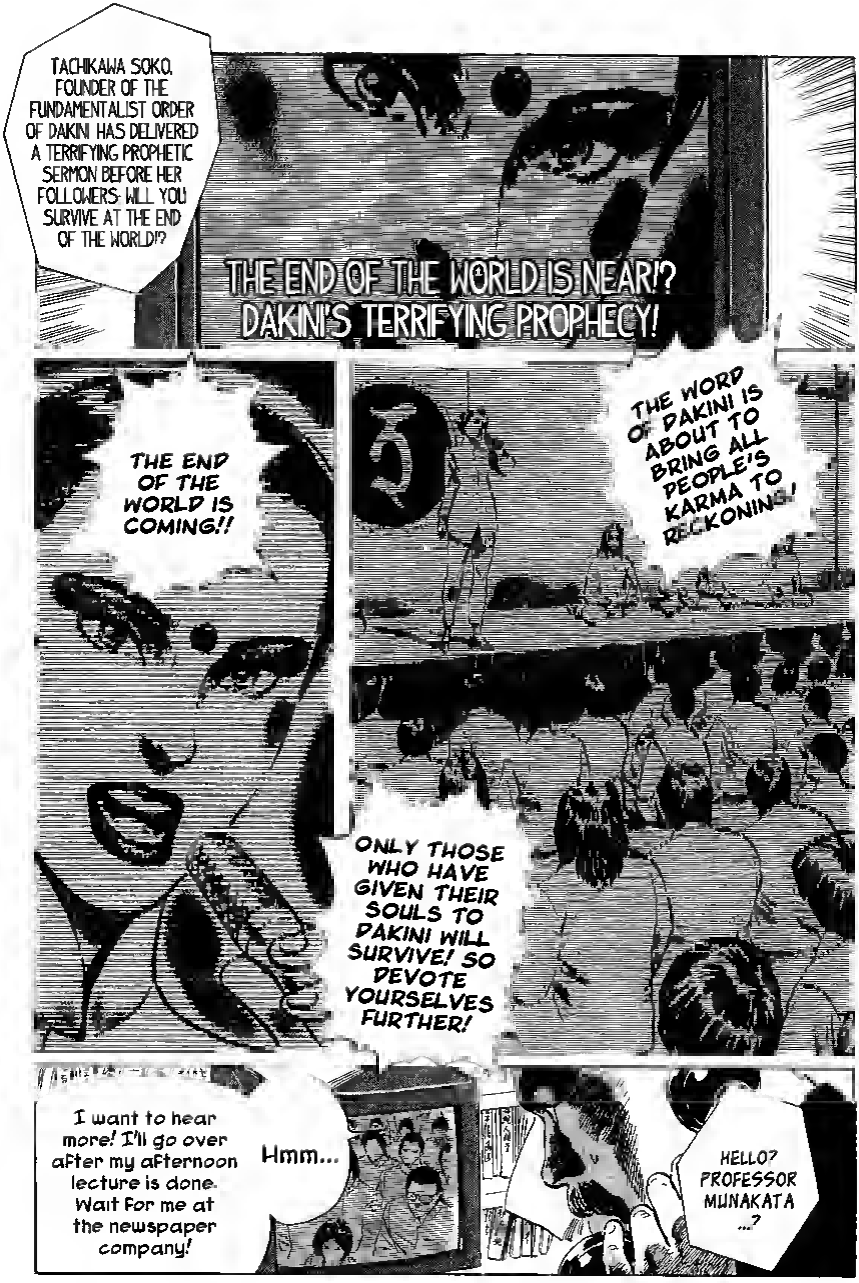
But when talks of a nuclear power plant construction started, the Order went and resold the land to the power plant.

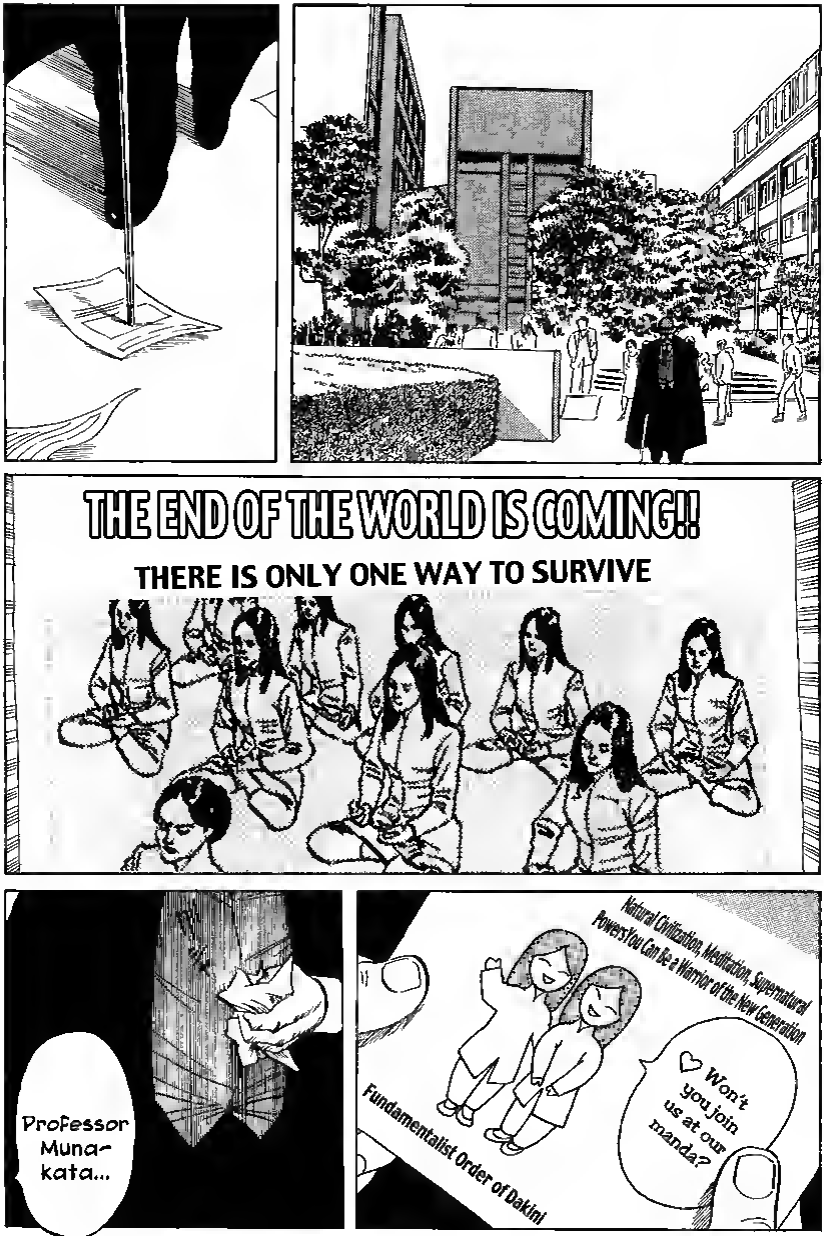

HERE'S THE MORNING NEWS!
I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL THAT THIS WAS PLANNED ALL ALONG.
.....

YES, THAT'S THE STRANGE PART.
WHY!? I THOUGHT THE ORDER IS ANTI-NUCLEAR POWER!

Usually, power companies that try to buy land to construct a nuclear power plant are met with fierce resistance, but in this case the deal went without a hitch! The deal was made at a high asking price!

Meaning that the Order was practically given a free pass into the power plant in order to worship at the shrine!
Now, about the shrine.
Before they sold the land, they set the condition that the shrine remain as it is.
WHAT!?
The laborers have leaked that they've brought in cardboard boxes which they call "offerings" and spent some time in prayer on two or three occasions.
Naturally, the power plant was hesitant about this, but with a little arm-twisting, they approved this top-secretly.
NOW FOR OUR NEXT NEWS ITEM!


TACHIKAWA SOKO, FOUNDER OF THE FUNDAMENTALIST ORDER OF DAKINI HAS DELIVERED A TERRIFYING PROPHETIC SERMON BEFORE HER FOLLOWERS. WILL YOU SURVIVE AT THE END OF THE WORLD!?
THE END OF THE WORLD IS NEAR!? DAKINI'S TERRIFYING PROPHECY!
THE END OF THE WORLD IS COMING!!
THE WORD OF DAKINI IS ABOUT TO BRING ALL PEOPLE'S KARMA TO RECKONING!
ONLY THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR SOULS TO DAKINI WILL SURVIVE! SO DEVOTE YOURSELVES FURTHER!
I want to hear more! I'll go over after my afternoon lecture is done. Wait for me at the newspaper company!
Hmm...
HELLO? PROFESSOR MUNAKATA ...?


THE END OF THE WORLD IS COMING!!
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SURVIVE
Professor Munakata...
Natural Civilization, Meditation, Supernatural Powers! You Can Be a Warrior of the New Generation
Won't you join us at our manda?
Fundamentalist Order of Dakini

Midori-kawa!
Oh, I was just going back to Toyokawa myself.
I kind of feel bad asking this of you...
But isn't that your girl-friend?
Oh, please! Maya's just a friend! We're in the same movement, that's all.
We had an environmentalist group assembly in Tokyo, and I called Asai on the phone a few hours back and he told me about you.

Yeah, a little. I know their proselytization's caused a lot of problems..
You know about the Order?
..So Toyokawa Power Plant and the Fundamentalist Order of Dakini are related..?
What do you mean?
I may have been blinded by the fact that they were a religious organization... I cannot believe that I did not think this through!

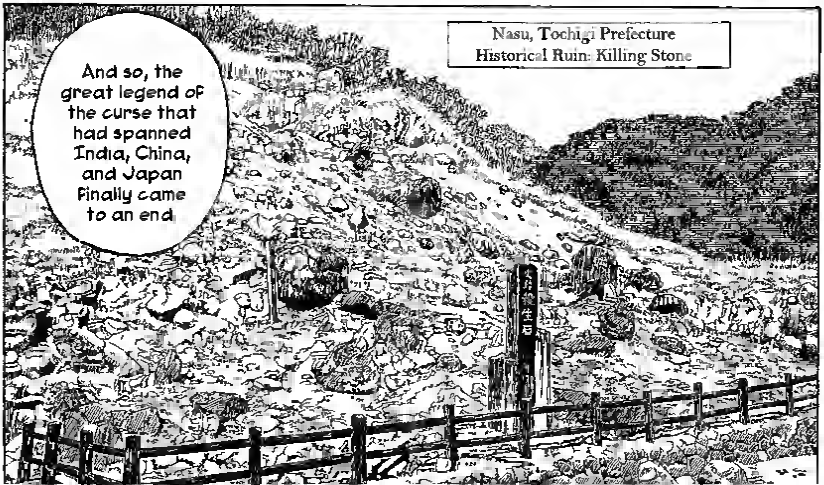
The string of nuclear power plant accidents in India and China made this story come to mind...
It's also known as the legend of the "Nine-Tailed Fox" in medieval picture scrolls.
Do you know the story of the "Killing Stone"?
In Spring of the first year of Kyuju (1154), a woman of unequalled beauty appeared before Toba in Kyoto, and she instantly won the affection of many.
Her name was Tamamo-no-Mae... No one knew her true name.
It was then that Former-Emperor Toba began to gradually grow thinner. His symptoms grew worse day by day...

That Tamamo-no-Mae, who was in the Emperor's service, was actually an evil goddess born in Tianzhu (India), where she had slain a thousand kings.
He summoned the esteemed Onmyoji Abe-no-Yasunari, whose divination revealed a most frightening result
She then moved on to China, where she became King Zhou's queen Daji, and through her flagrant misgovernment, destroyed the kingdom
Her true identity was that of a nine-tailed Fox!
And finally, she had come to Japan, where she planned to overthrow the Emperor and rule Japan!

Pursuers were sent after her immediately, and the great Fox was finally found and felled on Nasu Plain in the province of Shimotsuke.
However...
Having been exposed by Abe-no-Yasunari's clever plan, Tamamo-no-Mae gritted her teeth and fled
ドオン

It was about this time that the word "Genno" came to mean hammer...
The gas would not stop until much later, when the High Priest Genno crushed it with a hammer.

This is what we know as the "Killing Stone"...
The dead Fox turned into a stone, and emitted a strong toxic gas, killing all men and beasts that came near it.


And so, the great legend of the curse that had spanned India, China, and Japan finally came to an end.
Nasu, Tochigi Prefecture
Historical Ruin: Killing Stone

India, China, and Japan also happens to the route of the transmission of Buddhism and esotericism, and the course of Dakini as well.
Indeed, it was said that around the first year of Kyuju, Fujiwara-no-Tadazane of the regent clan used the Austerity of Dakini-ten for his political restoration, and it is a historical fact that Emperor Konoe and former-Emperor Toba died of illness successively.
Esoteric sorcery, which involved burning cedar-sticks during prayer to realize one's great ambition, was used frequently in political turmoil, but among them, the most miraculous was the Austerity of Dakini-ten.
But what I am more concerned about now is that disasters have occurred in both India and China!
So one theory says that this legend was created parallel to this historical fact,
and that the Nine-Tailed Fox implies the Dakini faith.

It is my assumption that the Fundamentalist Order of Dakini plotted the nuclear power plant accidents...!
P... Professor Munakata, you don't mean...!?
I don't know whether they converted the workers in the power plant, or sent in their own believers as workers,
but either way, if they brainwashed the workers with anti-nuclear teachings, it would be possible for them to conduct sabotage!
They made the prophecies, then carried them out... Simple as that.

And now it's Japan! The Order has declared the end of the world in Japan!
If they plan to repeat the same thing here, then Toyokawa's...
I'm Maha-lakshmi, the ninth Dakini Jhara.
No matter how great our protests are, it would be impossible for us to decommis-sion all the nuclear power plants in Japan, Professor Munakata.
But there is just one possibility...

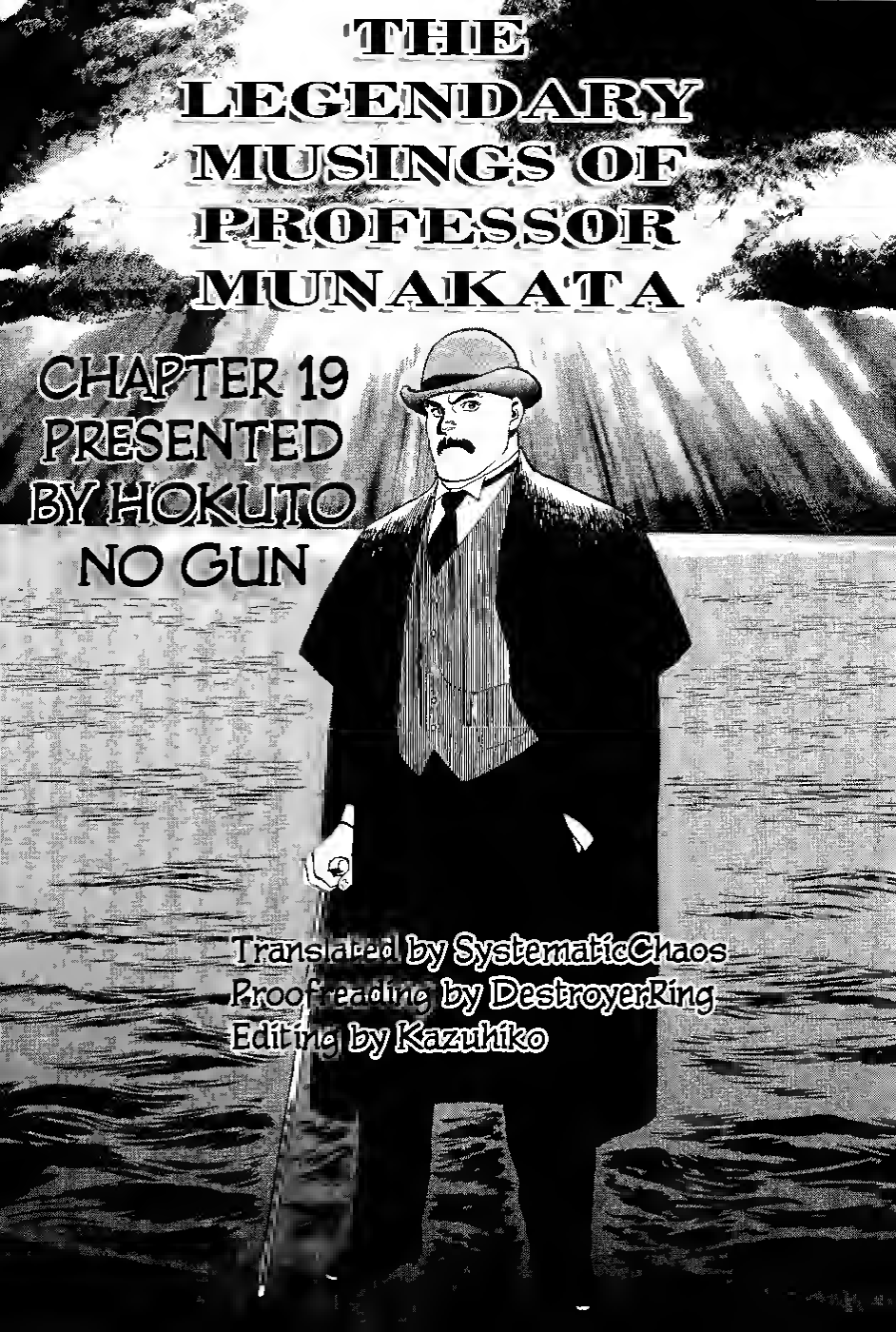
If we just cause a serious accident in one nuclear power plant, all nuclear power plants will be gone!
Thus says the Leader!
M... Midorikawa..
If...

File 19: The Killing Stone (Part 1) – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 19

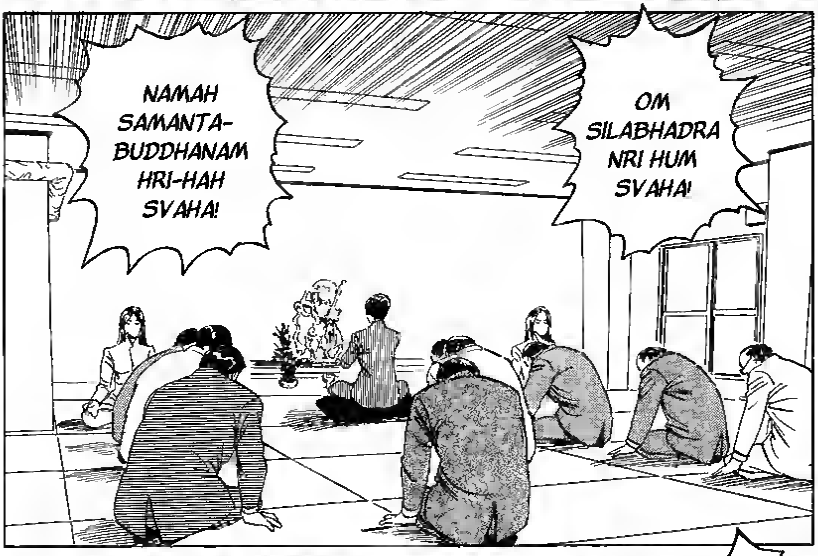
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN

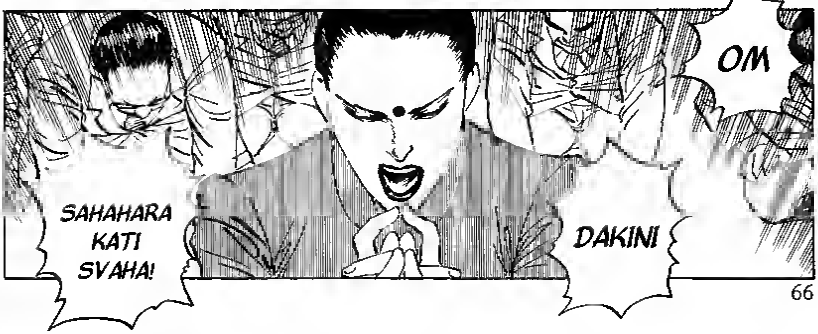


Translated by SystematicChaos
Proofreading by DestroyerRing
Editing by Kazuhiko

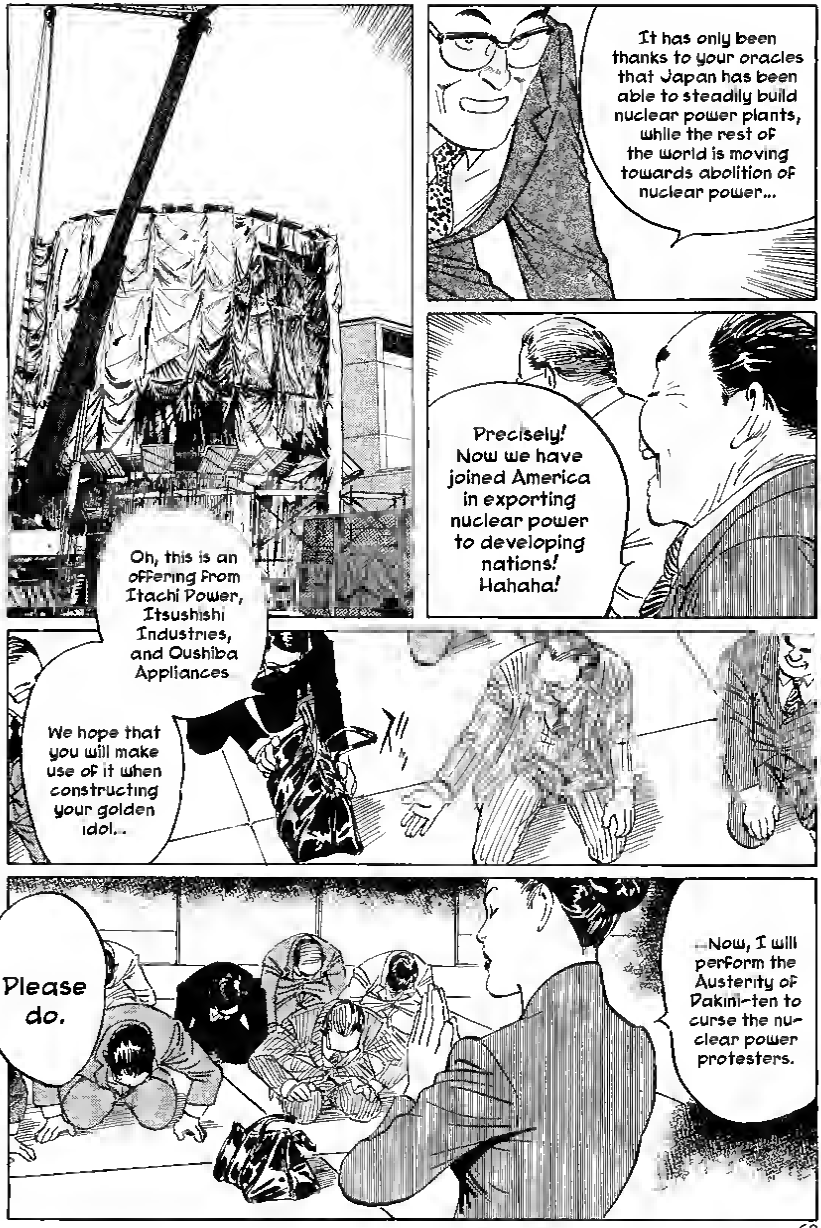
FILE 20: THE KILLING STONE : PART 2

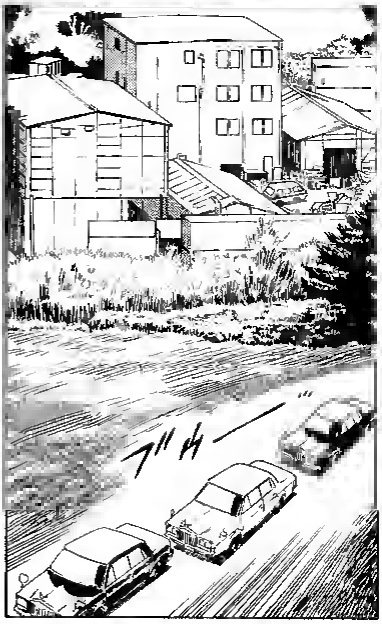
OM DAKINI SAHAHARA KATI SVAHA!

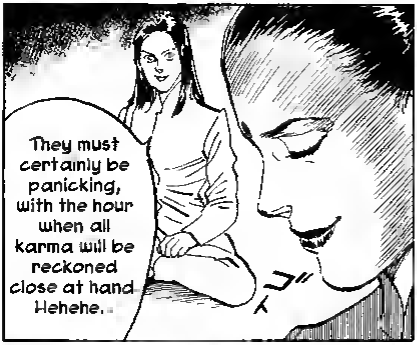

NAMAH SAMANTA-BUDDHANAM HRI-HAH SVAHA!
OM SILABHADRA NRI HUM SVAHA!

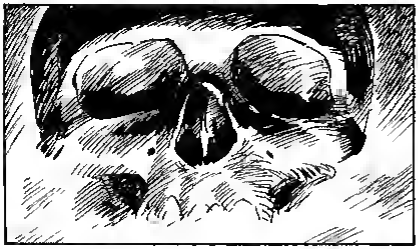

OM
SAHAHARA KATI SVAHA!
DAKINI

While these recent events have rocked the common world, you need not be concerned. You may simply continue to create power by the nuclear flame.
Dakini's oracle says that you have no need for worry.
Thank you so much!
You're exactly right, Mrs Tachikawa
I must say, there are a lot of protest groups on the move after the accidents in India and China, so not only is the Atomic Energy Commission concerned, but even Mr. Okuma and Mr. Tanuki from the ruling party!
So what concern is it how this power is created? As long as there are no major accidents...
No one can survive without power. Who would be willing to give up their phones, their air conditioners, or their TV dramas?

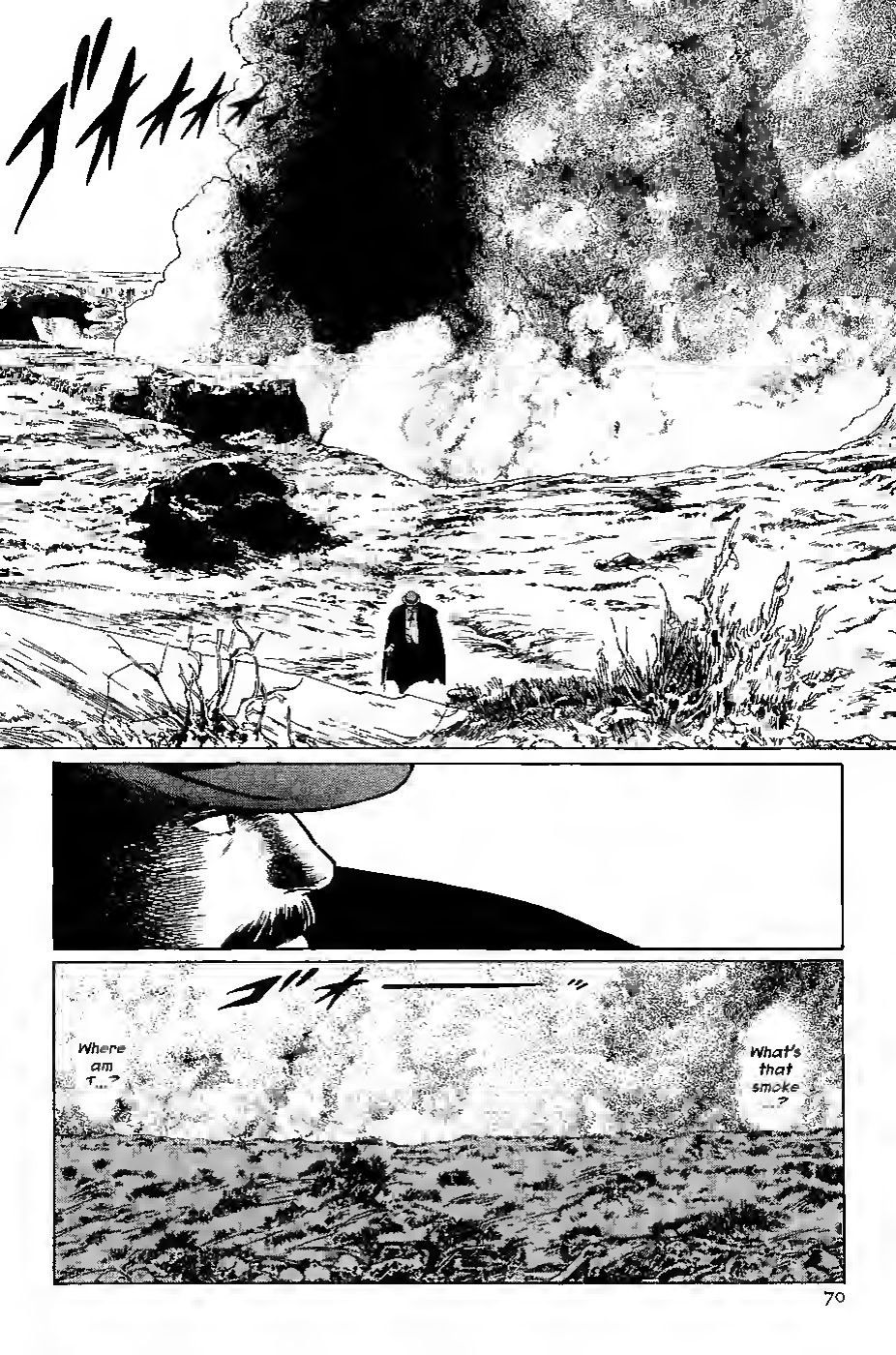

It has only been thanks to your oracles that Japan has been able to steadily build nuclear power plants, while the rest of the world is moving towards abolition of nuclear power...
Precisely! Now we have joined America in exporting nuclear power to developing nations! Hahaha!
Oh, this is an offering from Itachi Power, Itsushishi Industries, and Oushiba Appliances
We hope that you will make use of it when constructing your golden idol..
Please do.
...Now, I will perform the Austerity of Dakini-ten to curse the nuclear power protesters.




They must certainly be panicking, with the hour when all karma will be reckoned close at hand Hehehe.



You wicked ghouls...
You have most diligently constructed the very devices that will bring about the end of the world.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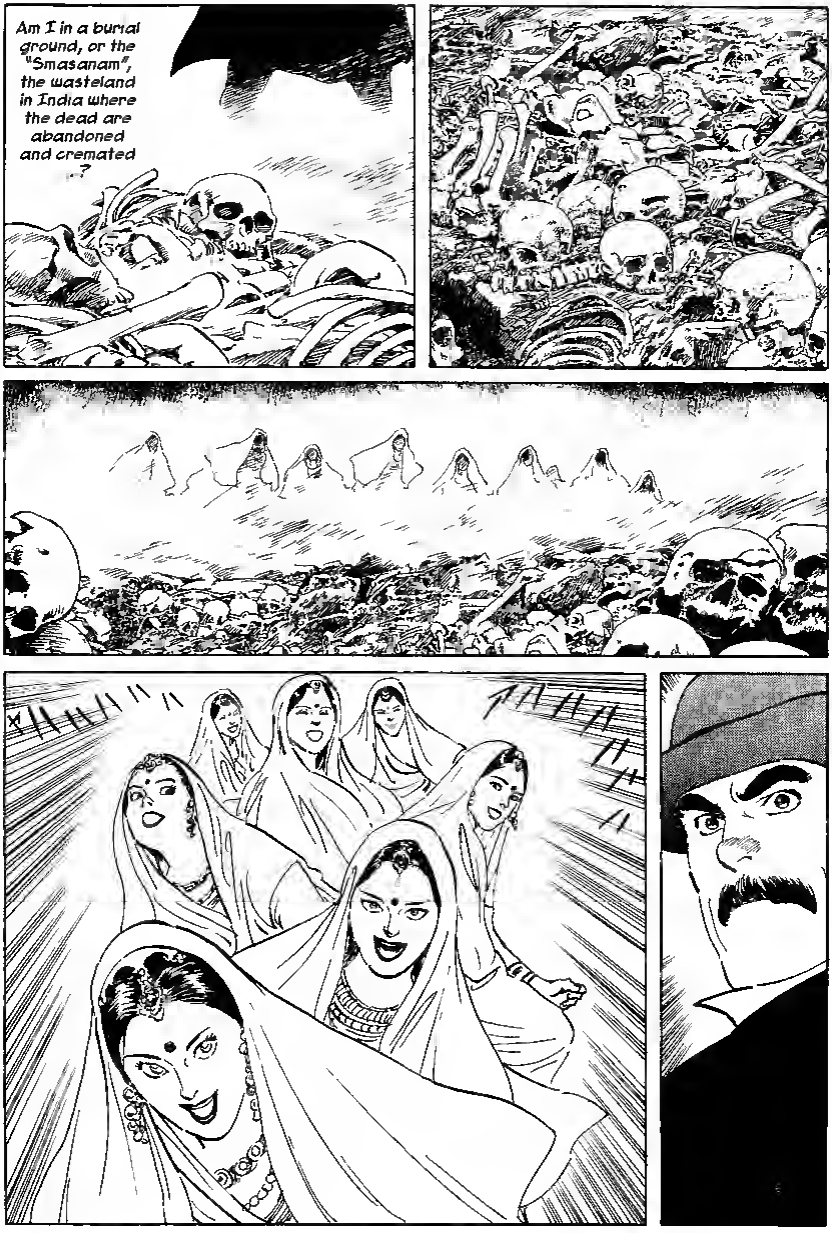
ゴオオ――――"
Where am I...?
What's that smoke ...?


Am I in a burial ground, or the "Smasanam", the wasteland in India where the dead are abandoned and cremated ...?

These women are the Dakini Jhala!

The women converts of Dakini would engage in lewd secret rites in the Smasanam...
They would kill the male pilgrims that drowned in their pleasure, and sacrifice them.
to Dakini!

!

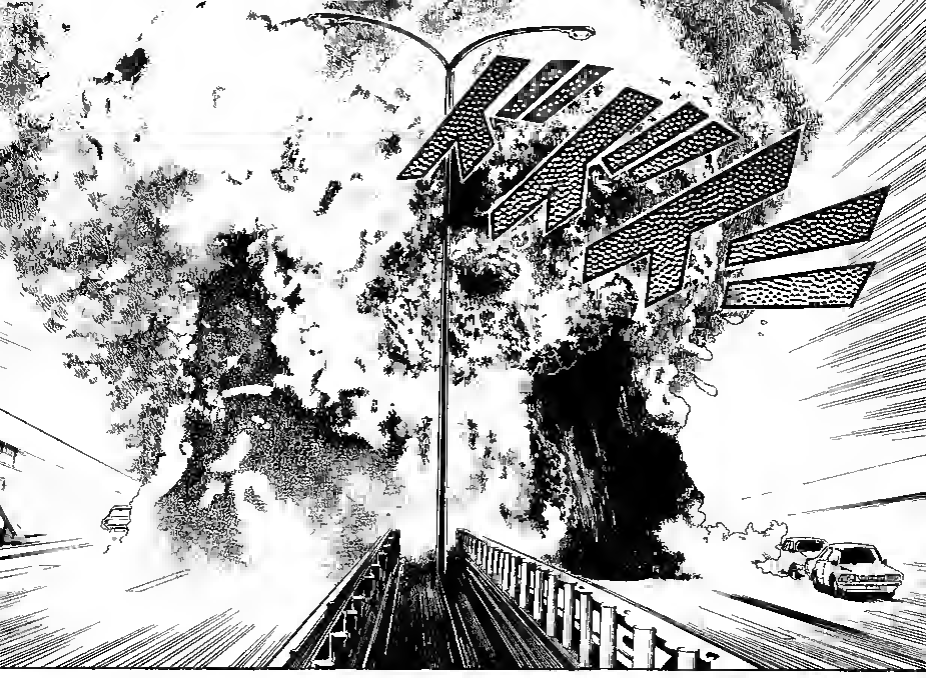
WAAA
AAAAA
UUUGG
HHH...

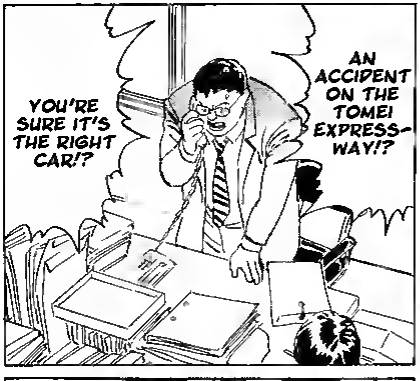
URR RRRR RRRR RGGG HH...
G... GGHH HH...
WAIT! I'LL CALL FOR INSTRUC-TIONS...
WE CAN'T LET HIM STRUG-GLE HERE!
W...WE'LL BE AT THE FUJI INTERCHANGE SOON! YOU DON'T THINK HE'LL WAKE UP BEFORE WE REACH HEAD-QUARTERS...?
HE SHOULDN'T! THAT WAS A STRONG SEDATIVE I GAVE HIM!

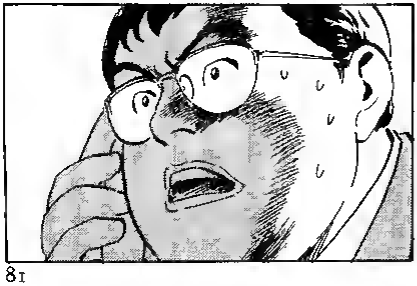
Should we inject him with another dose, Leader? He might die from shock if we inject him multiple times in succession.
What is it, Maha-lakshmi?
The sedative's worn off?
U-URR RGG H...
DID YOU SAY DIE OF SHOCK!? BUT WE WERE JUST SUPPOSED TO PUT HIM TO SLEEP!
You said that Munakata knows too much?
He is a risk to us! Put him under!

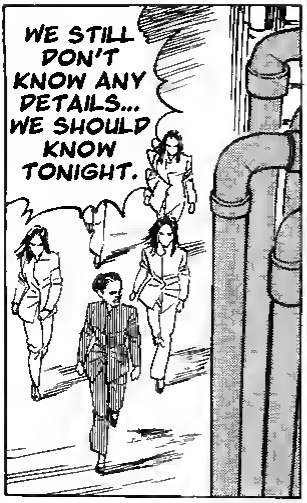
You dare defy our Leader!?
Before long, one-third of all Japanese will have their karma brought to reckoning.
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME! I'M NOT GONNA BE RESPONSIBLE FOR...
He's big enough that he won't die that easily!
STOP!!
ガタガタ
THIS ACCIDENT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE JUST ON THE LEVEL OF INDIA AND HONG KONG!
T... THAT MANY PEOPLE WILL DIE!?

WAAAAAAA AAAAUGH!

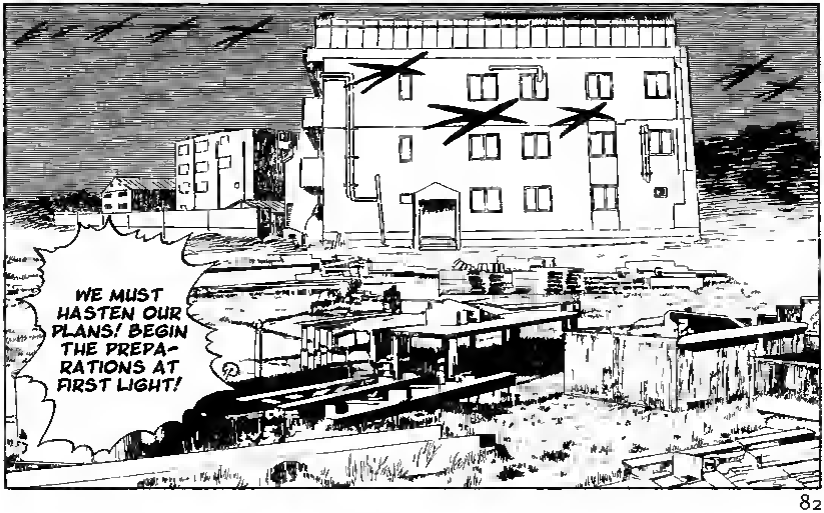


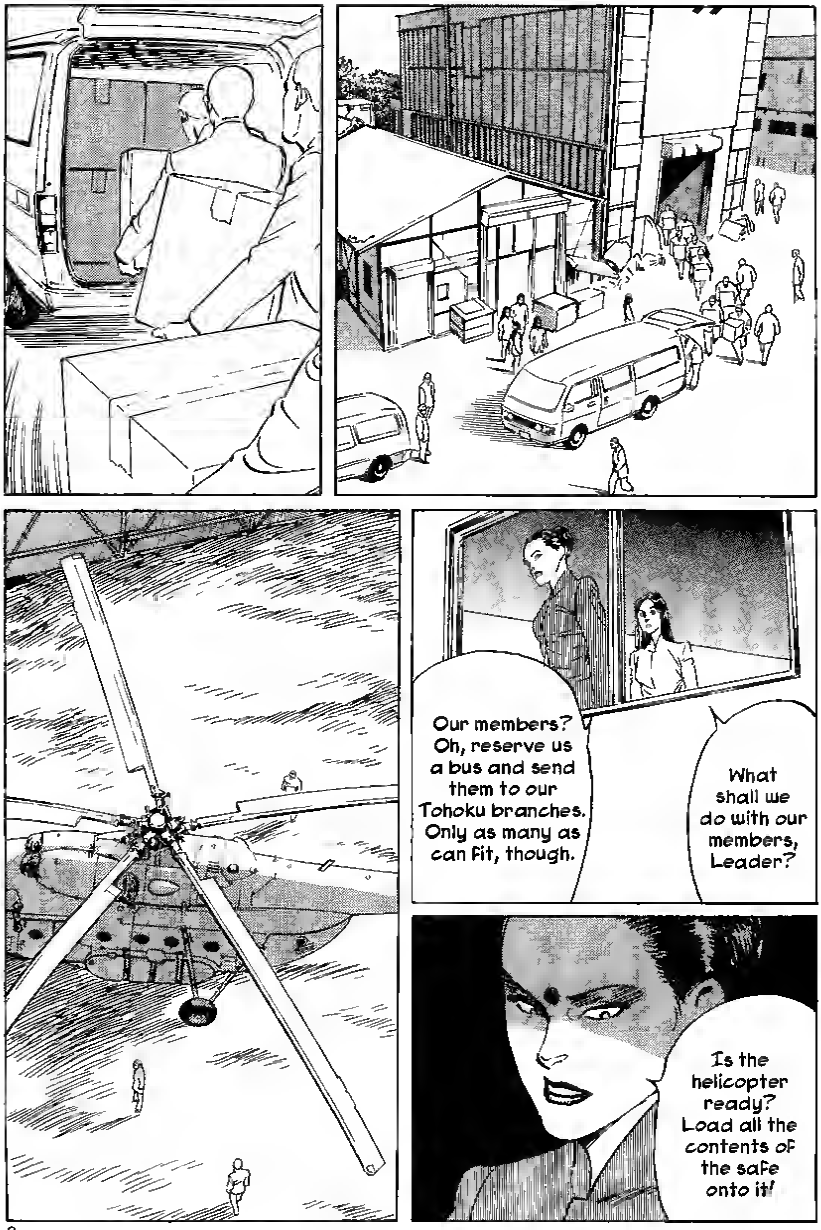

YOU'RE SURE IT'S THE RIGHT CAR!?
AN ACCIDENT ON THE TOMEI EXPRESS-WAY!?




WE STILL DON'T KNOW ANY DETAILS... WE SHOULD KNOW TONIGHT.

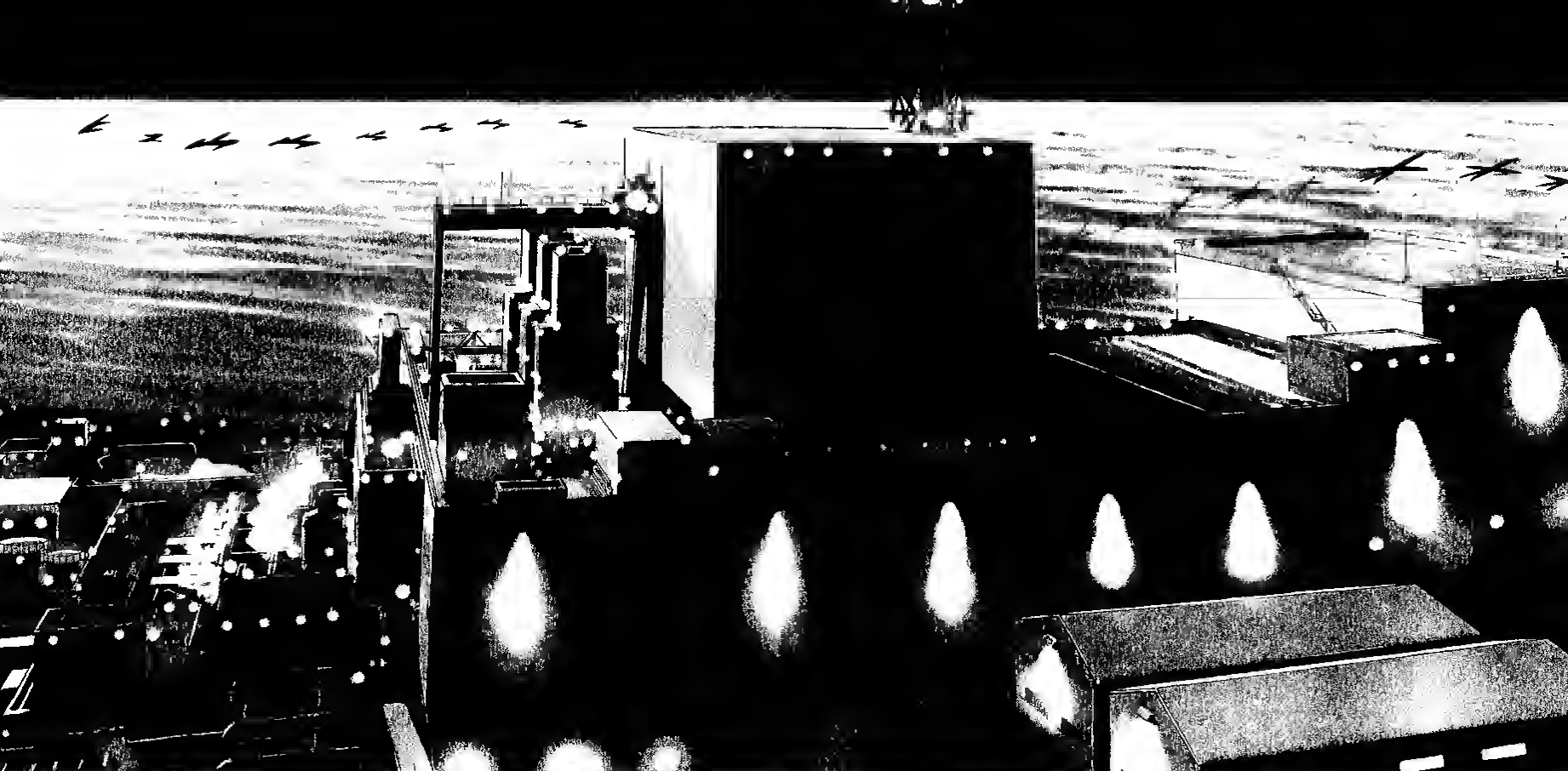
...SO WHAT ABOUT MUNAKATA? IS HE DEAD!?

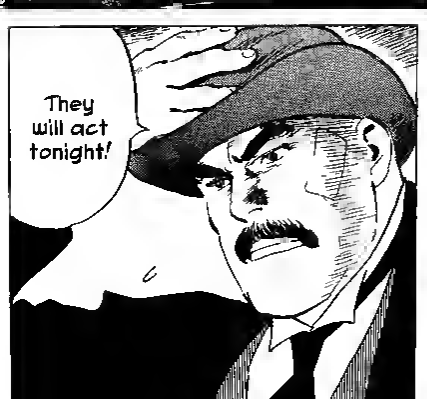

WE MUST HASTEN OUR PLANS! BEGIN THE PREPA-RATIONS AT FIRST LIGHT!

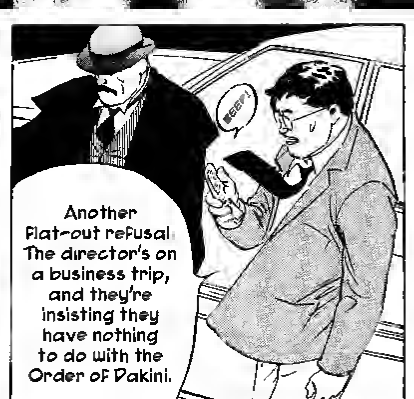

What shall we do with our members, Leader?
Our members? Oh, reserve us a bus and send them to our Tohoku branches. Only as many as can fit, though.
Is the helicopter ready? Load all the contents of the safe onto it!

Midorikawa is covered with burns all over, but they've at least saved his life.
But the girl from the Order didn't make it ..

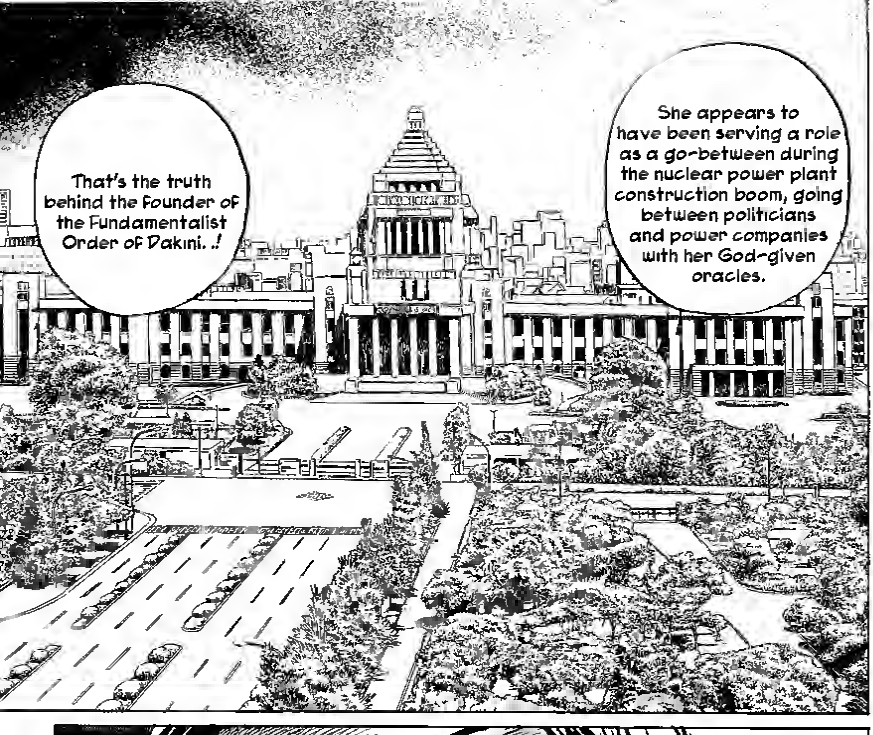
Are the police investigating this?
They at least know that this wasn't an ordinary accident. They found the syringes and sedatives in the car..
I see...
That's not what I mean! I mean what the Order is about to do!
N...No, not as far as I know... So far nothing's happened beyond accidents..
THEY SHOULD KNOW THAT I'M STILL ALIVE! THEY MAY ACT BEFORE ANY COMMOTION OCCURS!
Get me my clothes.
What are you going to do!? If we explain everything to the police...

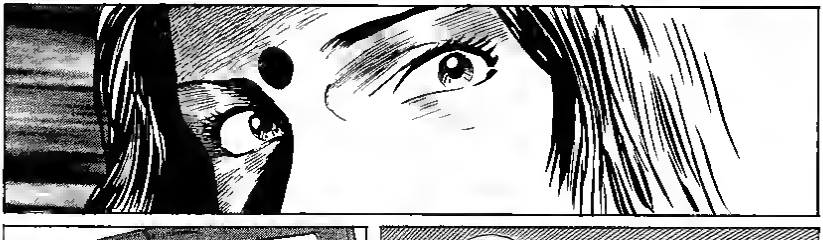


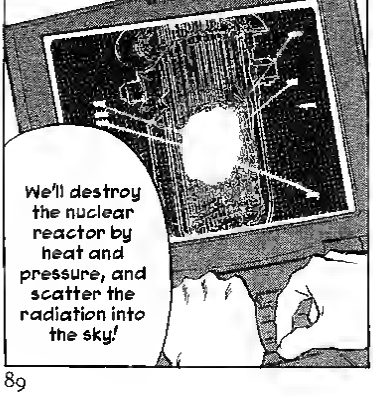

They will act tonight!

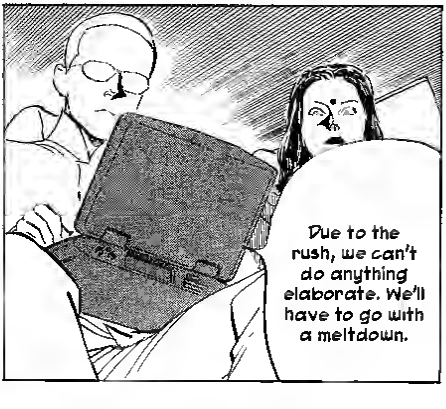

BEEP!
Another flat-out refusal. The director's on a business trip, and they're insisting they have nothing to do with the Order of Dakini.

Some say she came to Tokyo to work at a club in Ginza, but eventually she began her prophecies and oracles, which caused politicians and businessmen to flock to her.
You often hear about big-business executives putting their trust in dubious religions. So I suppose they would be Tachikawa Soko's connections.
Yeah... Her family of origin from a poor village in Tohoku was rumored to have that lineage — But nothing beyond that has been confirmed.
A "fox-possessed" lineage, eh...?


That's the truth behind the Founder of the Fundamentalist Order of Dakini. .!
She appears to have been serving a role as a go-between during the nuclear power plant construction boom, going between politicians and power companies with her God-given oracles.



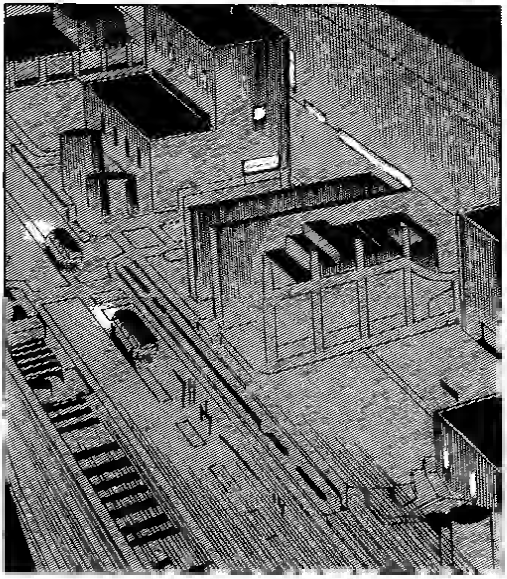

We'll destroy the nuclear reactor by heat and pressure, and scatter the radiation into the sky!

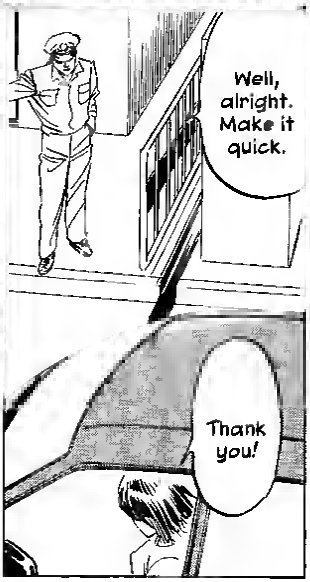

Due to the rush, we can't do anything elaborate. We'll have to go with a meltdown.

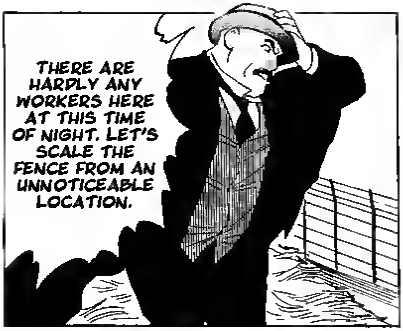
Due to the size of the nuclear reactor, it won't be as bad as Chernobyl, but if this east-blowing wind can carry the radiation, the whole region from Tokai to Kanto will be a disaster zone!
It'll cover one-third of Japan, at most...
What's the range of the radiation?
Tokyo will be abandoned and lose all its capital functions Thousands of refugees will flow to Tohoku and West Japan...
Very well. The prophecy will be fulfilled...!

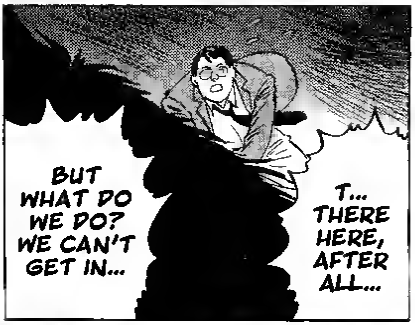
We're here for a special Festival at Dakini's shrine.

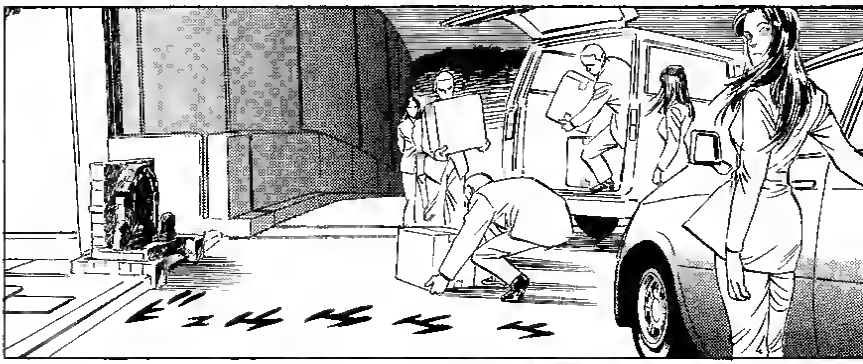
Well, you probably should have called us in advance... Are those your usual offerings in the van?

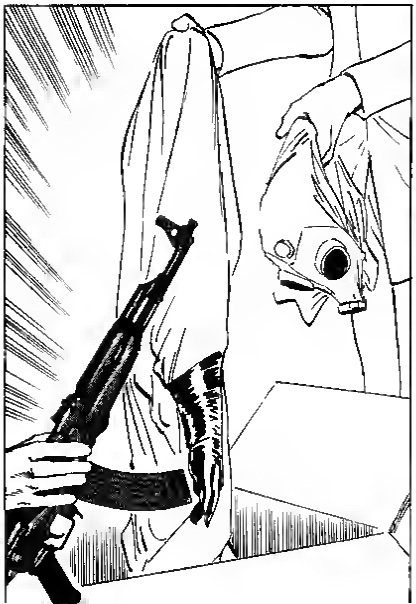


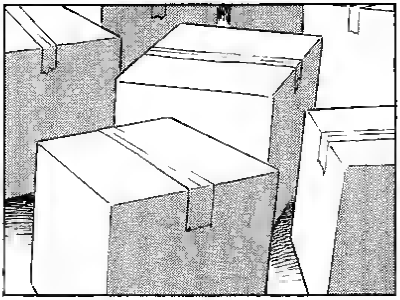

Well, alright. Make it quick.
Thank you!

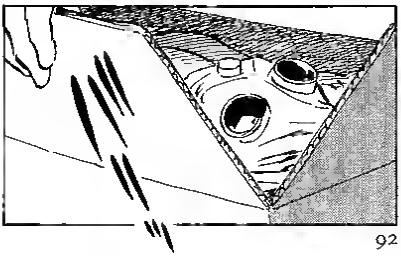

THERE ARE HARDLY ANY WORKERS HERE AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT. LET'S SCALE THE FENCE FROM AN UNNOTICEABLE LOCATION.

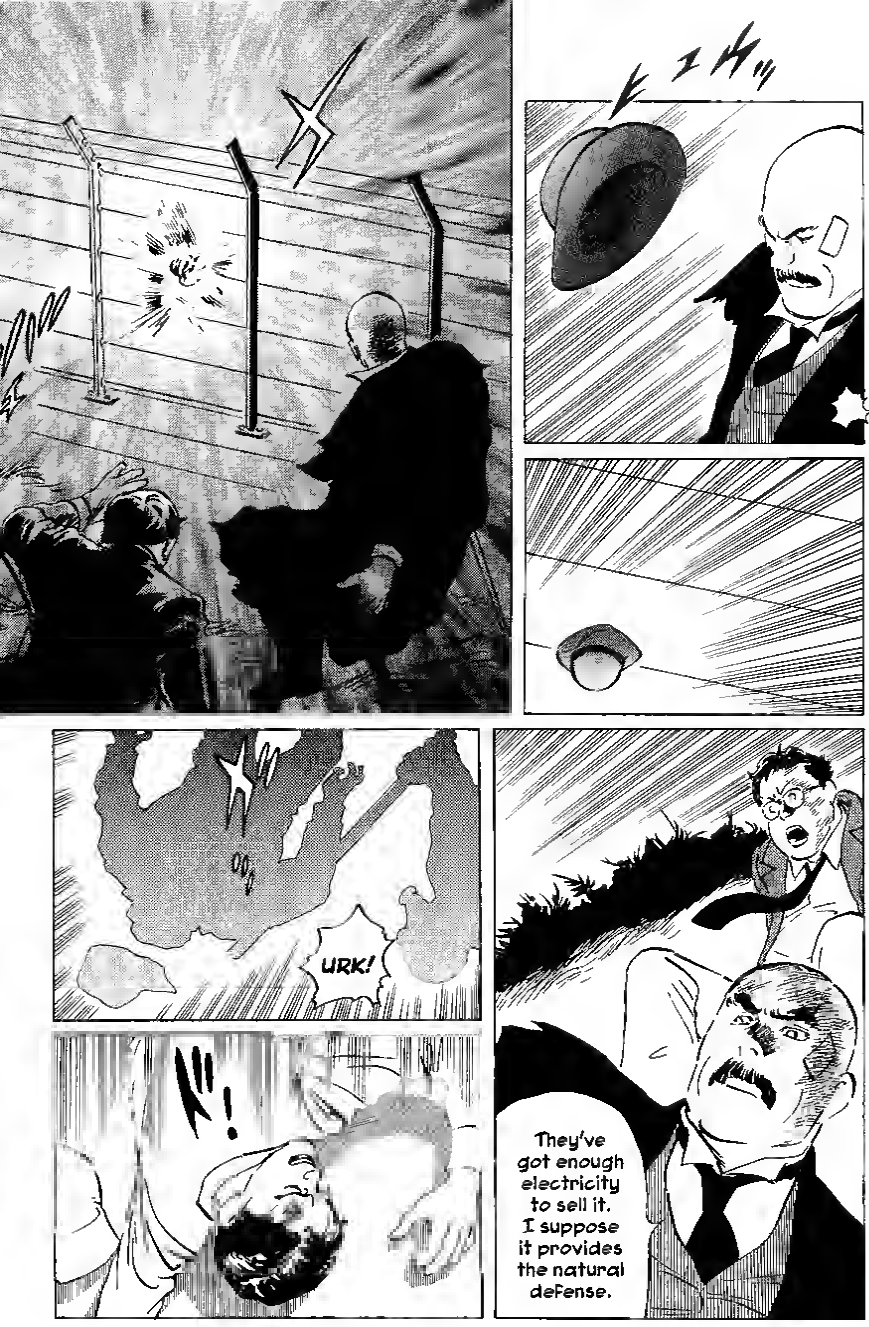

BUT WHAT DO WE DO? WE CAN'T GET IN...
T... THERE HERE, AFTER ALL...









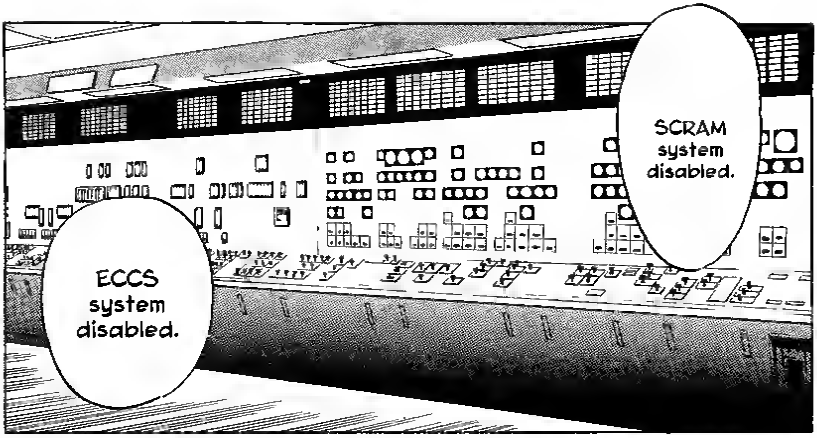

URK!
They've got enough electricity to sell it. I suppose it provides the natural defense.

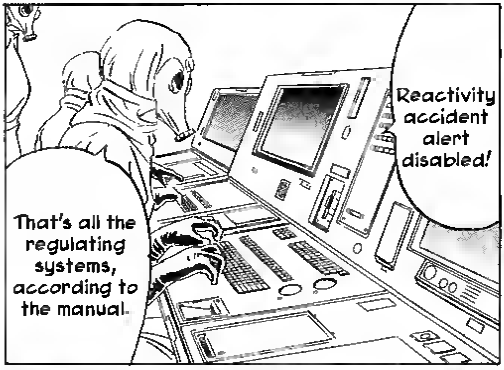
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THEY'LL DO! WAIT FOR THE POLICE CAR BY THE ENTRANCE!
Y...YOU'RE CALLING THE POLICE!? BUT THEY'LL CALL THE POWER PLANT TO CONFIRM!
Yes, that's right! A suspicious group infiltrated us by car and are trying to make their way to the reactor! I'm head manager Munakata! Please, make it quick!!
YOU'RE SURE LIVENED UP, PROFESSOR! IS IT BECAUSE OF THE DRUGS?
I AM ANGRY!
I CANNOT LET THEM DO THIS!!

OUR MEMBERS INFILTRATING THE PLANT SHOULD HAVE SHUT DOWN THE CHECK-POINTS!
GO TO THE CONTROL ROOM!

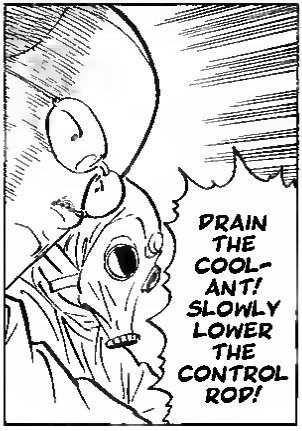
ガヤ・・・
BACKS TO THE WALL! ALL OF YOU!!

W...WE HAVEN'T BEEN NOTIFIED OF ANY-THING LIKE THAT!
JUST OPEN THE GATE! WE CAN'T REACH THE CONTROL CENTER BY PHONE!
Go straight! There's a small shrine by the storehouse!
I'm Munakata, and I made the call. I'll show you around!
Huh? Oh...

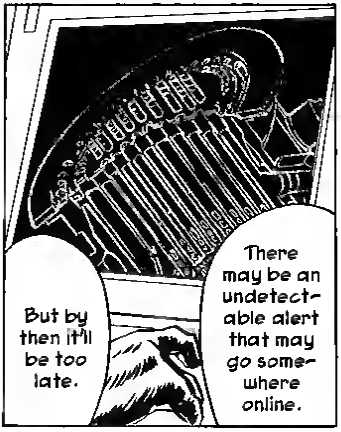

SCRAM system disabled.
ECCS system disabled.

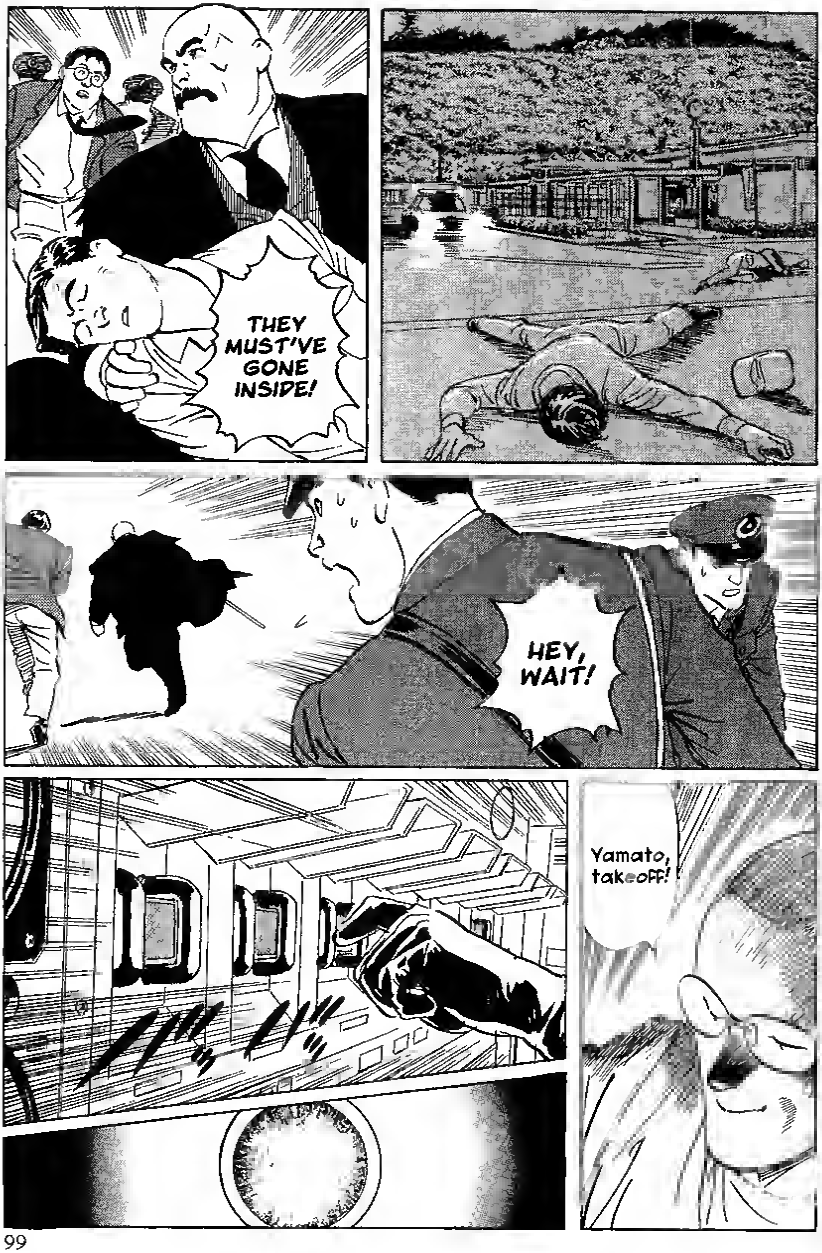

Reactivity accident alert disabled!
That's all the regulating systems, according to the manual.

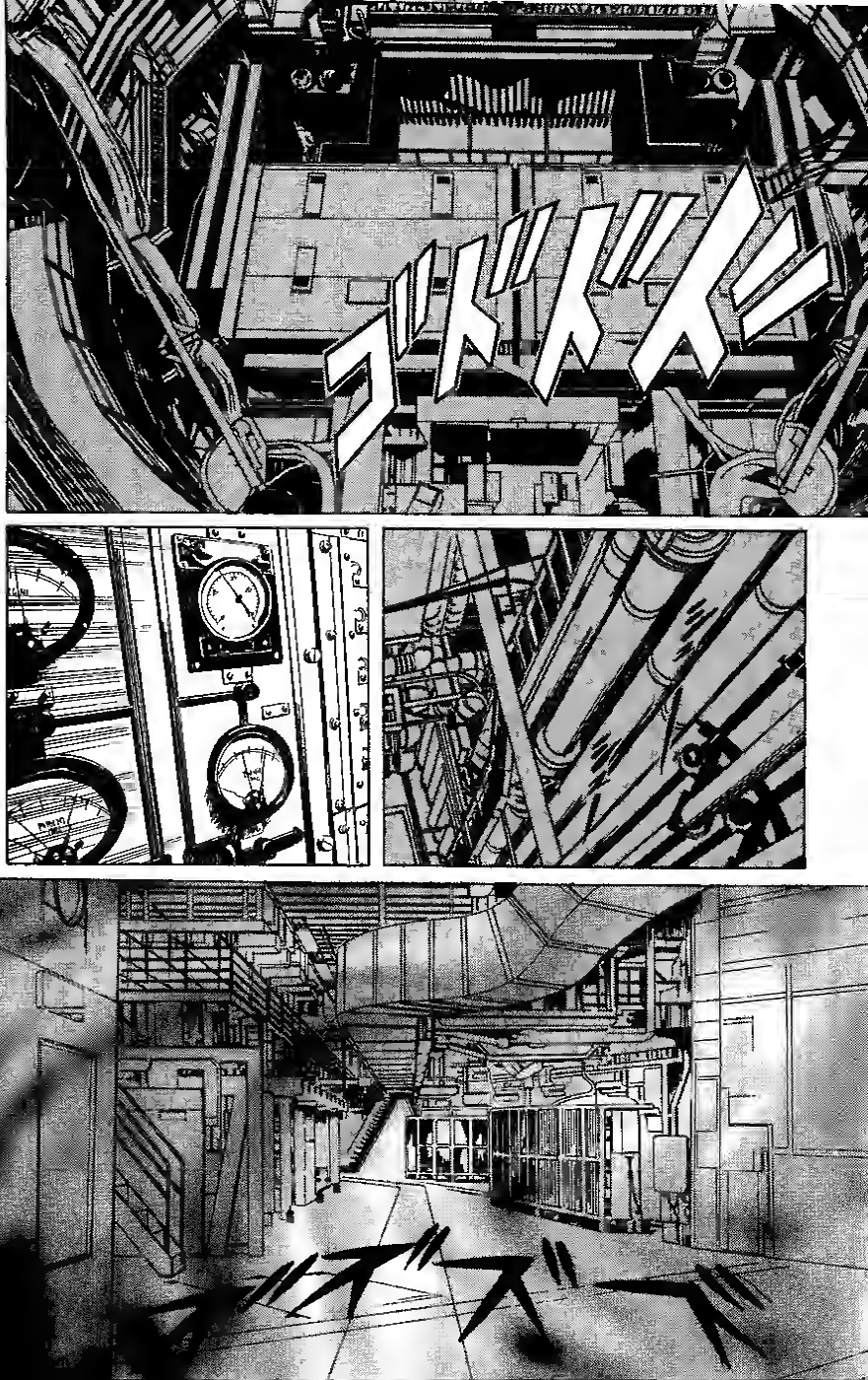
STOP THIS!


DRAIN THE COOLANT! SLOWLY LOWER THE CONTROL ROD!

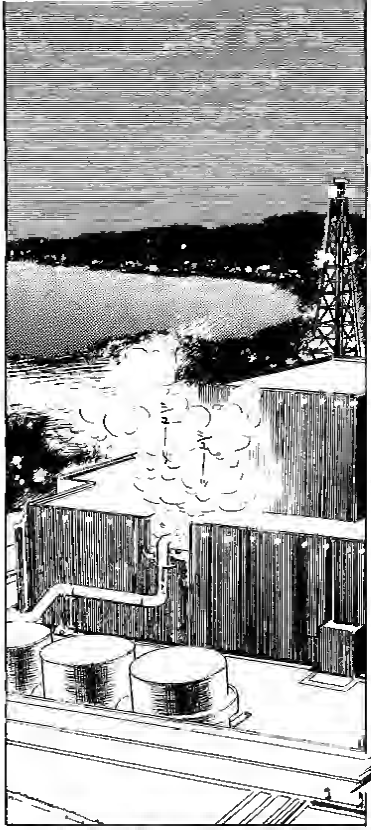
This mask is stuffy!


There may be an undetectable alert that may go somewhere online.
But by then it'll be too late.


THEY MUST'VE GONE INSIDE!
HEY, WAIT!
Yamato, takeoff!


ワールドズ

The nuclear reactor is going berserk.
Before long, the uranium fuel itself will melt off at a high temperature and destroy the reactor...!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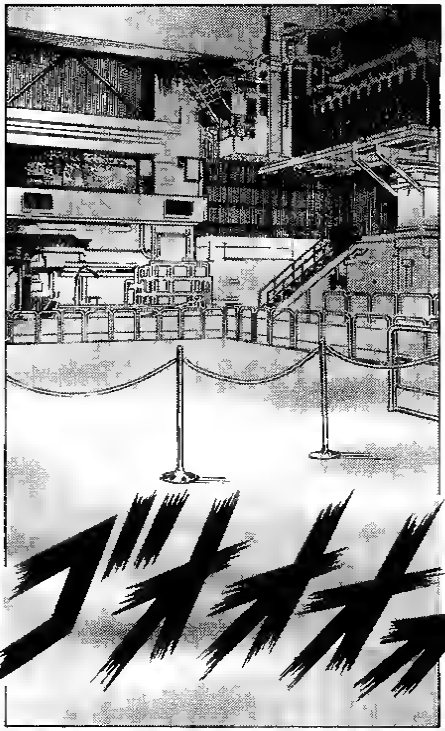
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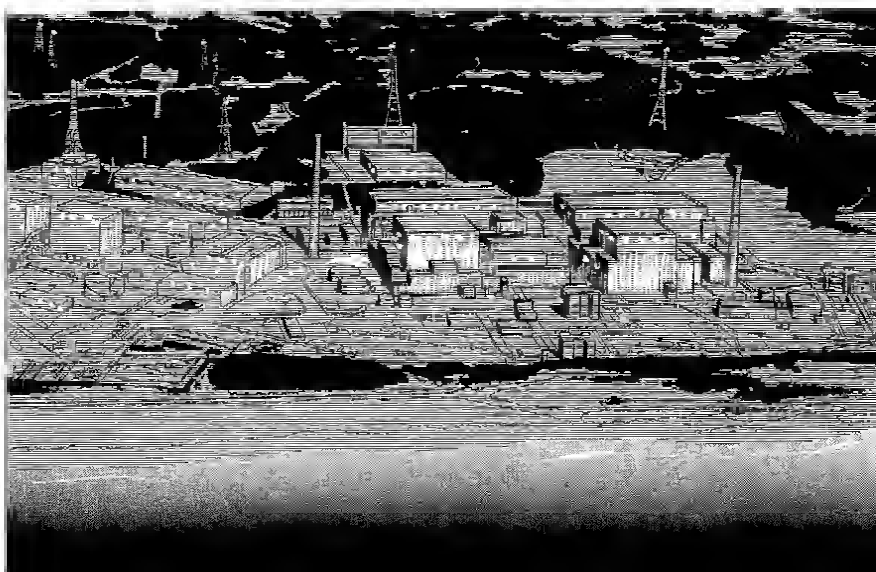
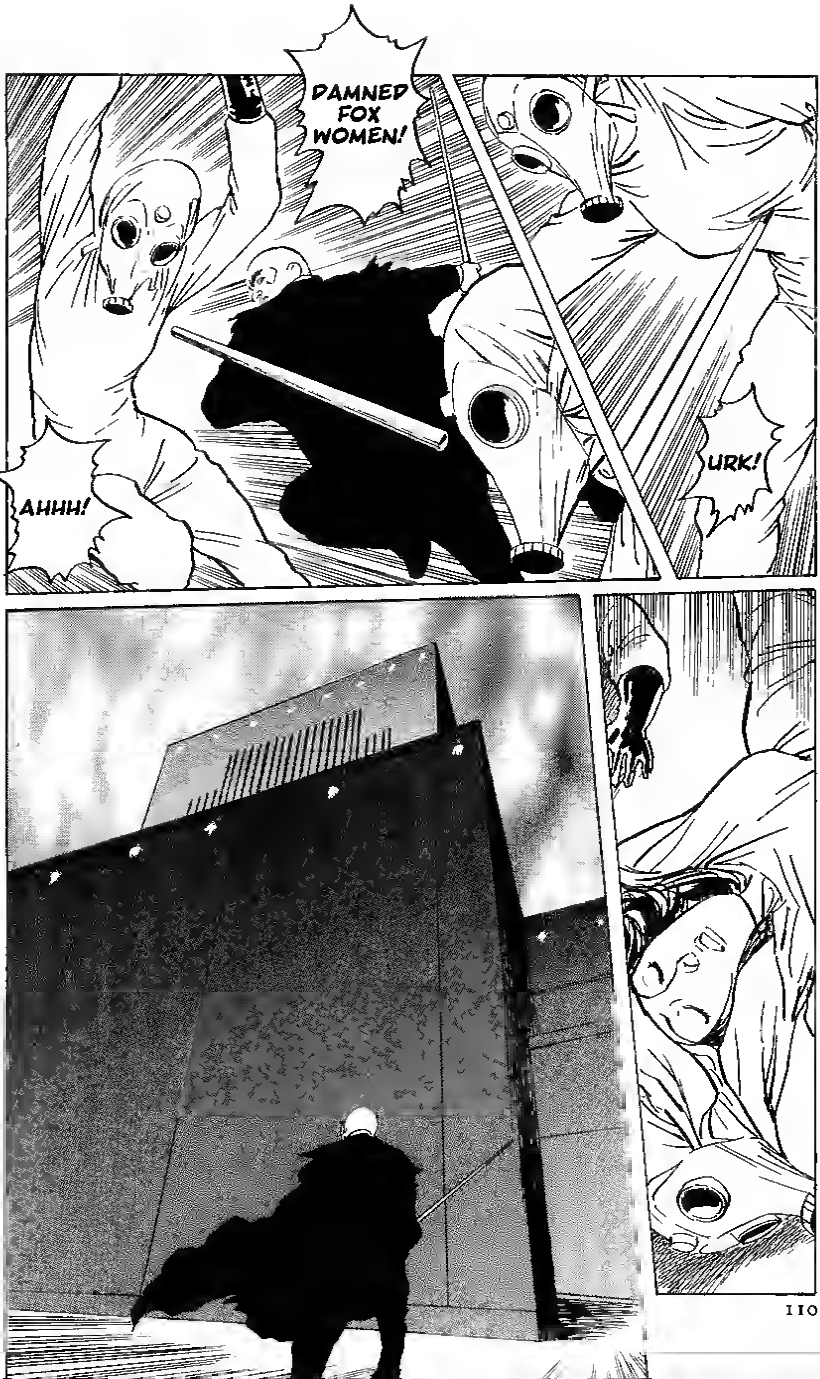
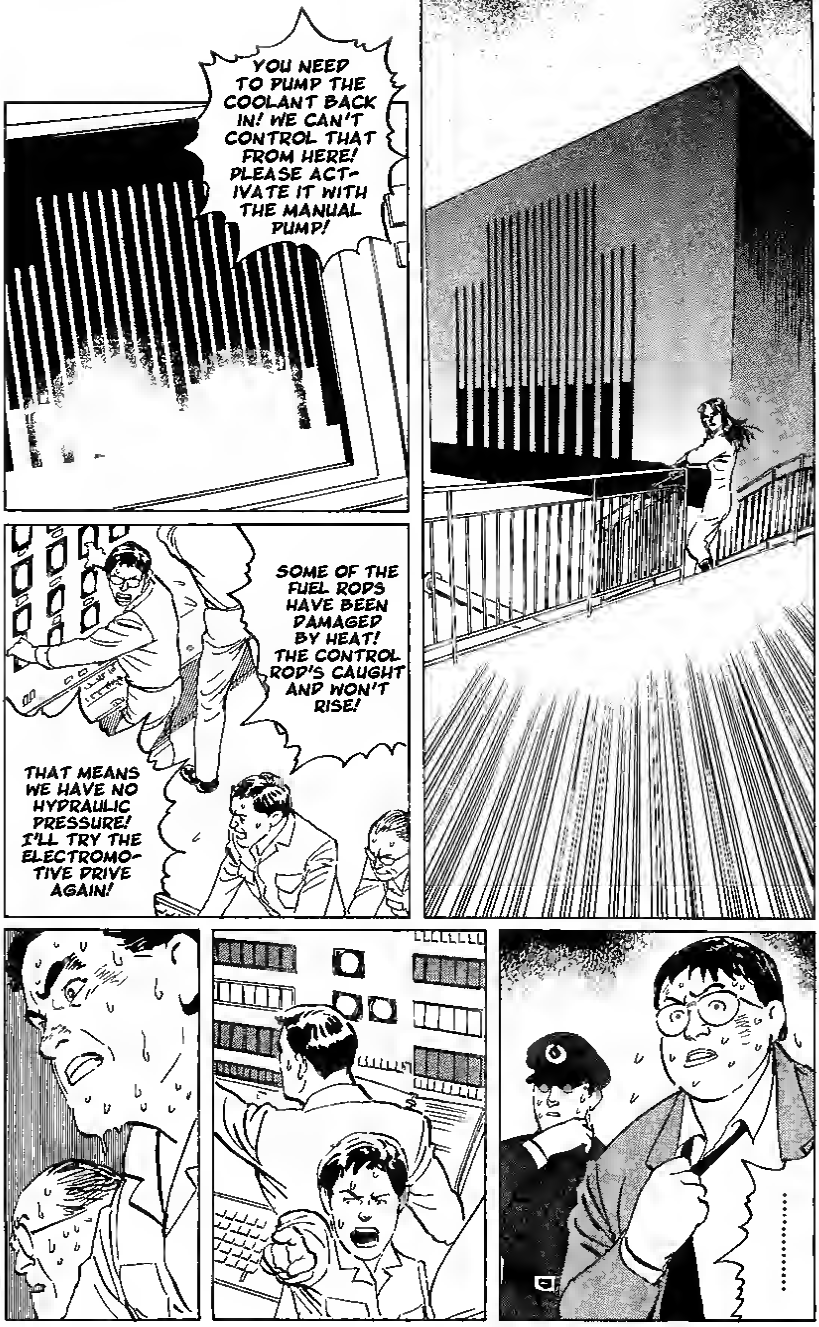


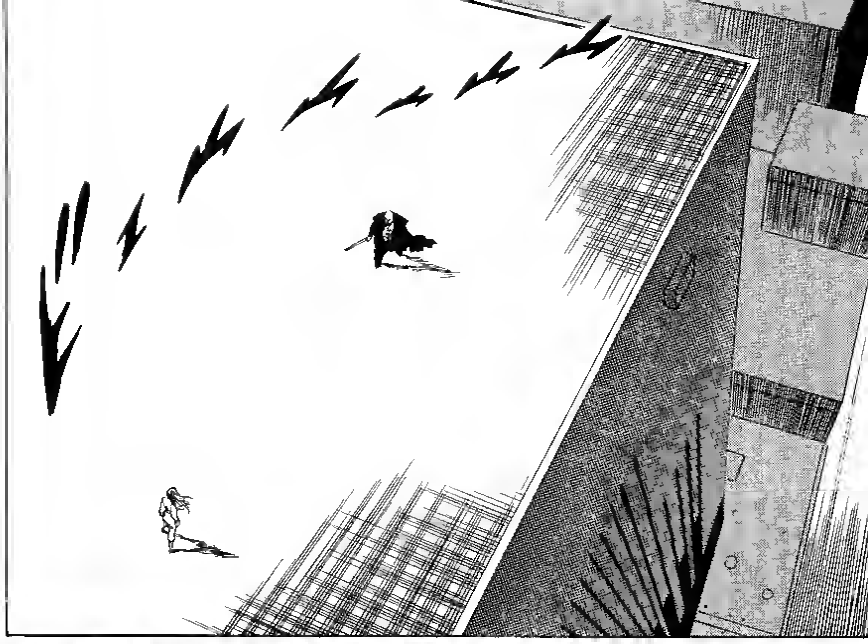
AS FOR YOU EMPLOYEES, DON'T TRY ANYTHING FUNNY!
AL-RIGHT, LET'S MOVE OUT!
EEEK...
D... DON'T MOVE!!

I... It's all over...
IF YOU GIVE UP, YOU'LL DIE, WE'LL DIE, AND THOUSANDS OF CITIZENS WILL DIE!!
PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER! DOESN'T THIS POWER PLANT ALWAYS MAKE CLAIMS OF ABSOLUTE SAFETY? DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS!!

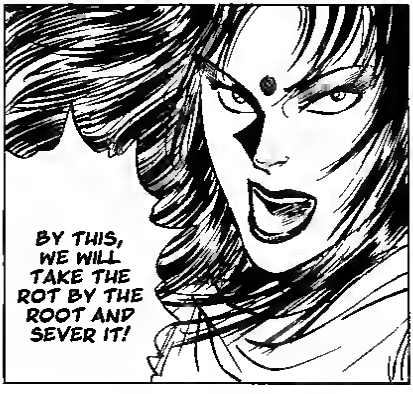
IT'LL BE TOO LATE IF WE WAIT FOR THE OFFICIALS! WE HAVE TO GET THE CITIZENS TO START EVACUATING NOW!
UNDER-STOOD!
R...RE-QUESTING BACKUP! ...AT TOYOKAWA POWER PLANT! THE FUNDA-MENTALIST ORDER OF DAKINI...
ASAI, YOU GET IN TOUCH WITH YOUR NEWSPAPER COMPANY, AND HAVE THEM PUT OUT AN EMERGENCY BULLETIN!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU!
HELLO... WHERE ARE YOU GOING, PROFES-SOR!?


DAMNED FOX WOMEN!
AHHH!
URK!


YOU NEED TO PUMP THE COOLANT BACK IN! WE CAN'T CONTROL THAT FROM HERE! PLEASE ACTIVATE IT WITH THE MANUAL PUMP!
SOME OF THE FUEL RODS HAVE BEEN DAMAGED BY HEAT! THE CONTROL ROD'S CAUGHT AND WON'T RISE!
THAT MEANS WE HAVE NO HYDRAULIC PRESSURE! I'LL TRY THE ELECTROMOTIVE DRIVE AGAIN!
.....

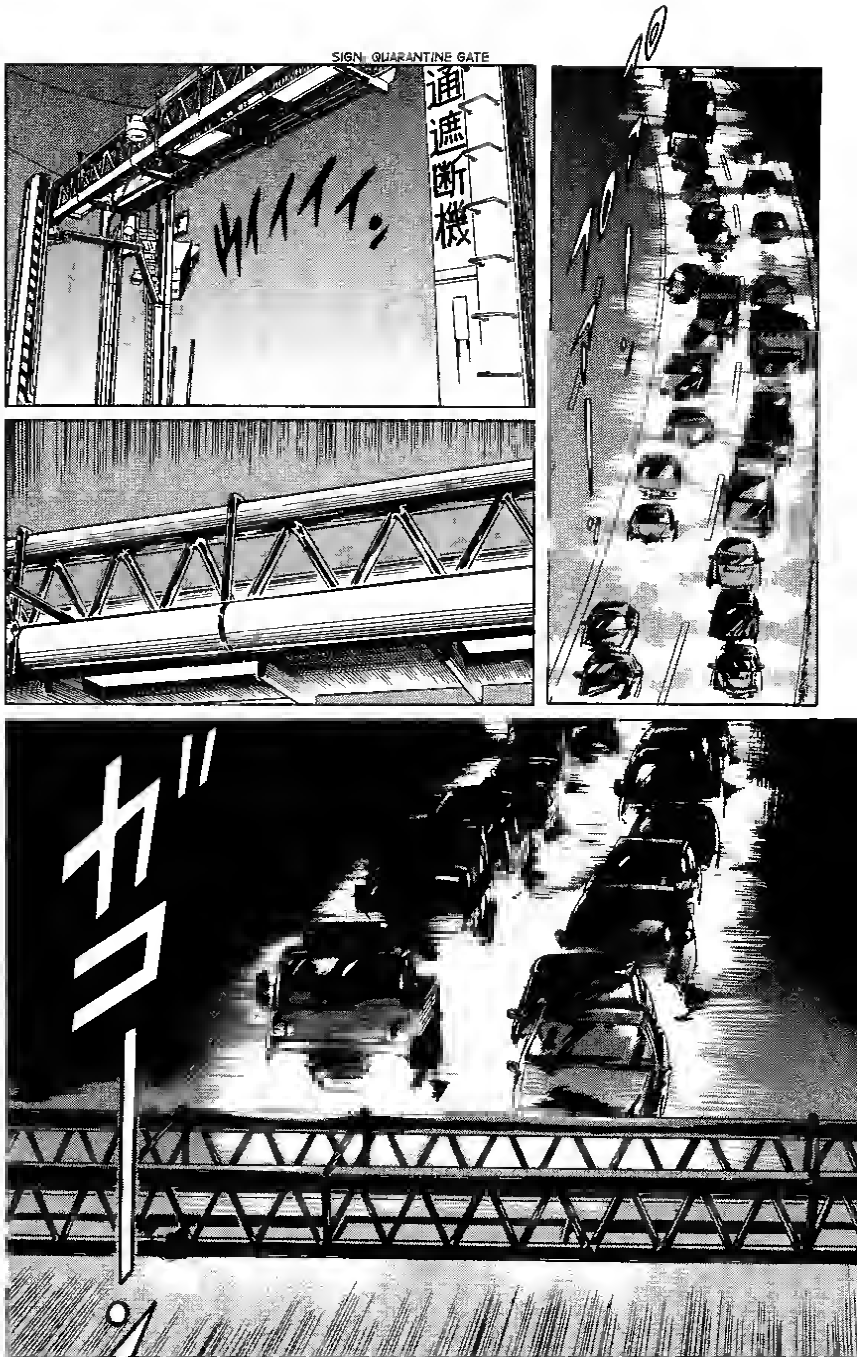


YOU ARE DESTINED TO DIE HERE ANYWAY, MUNAKATA. YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THE RADIATION.

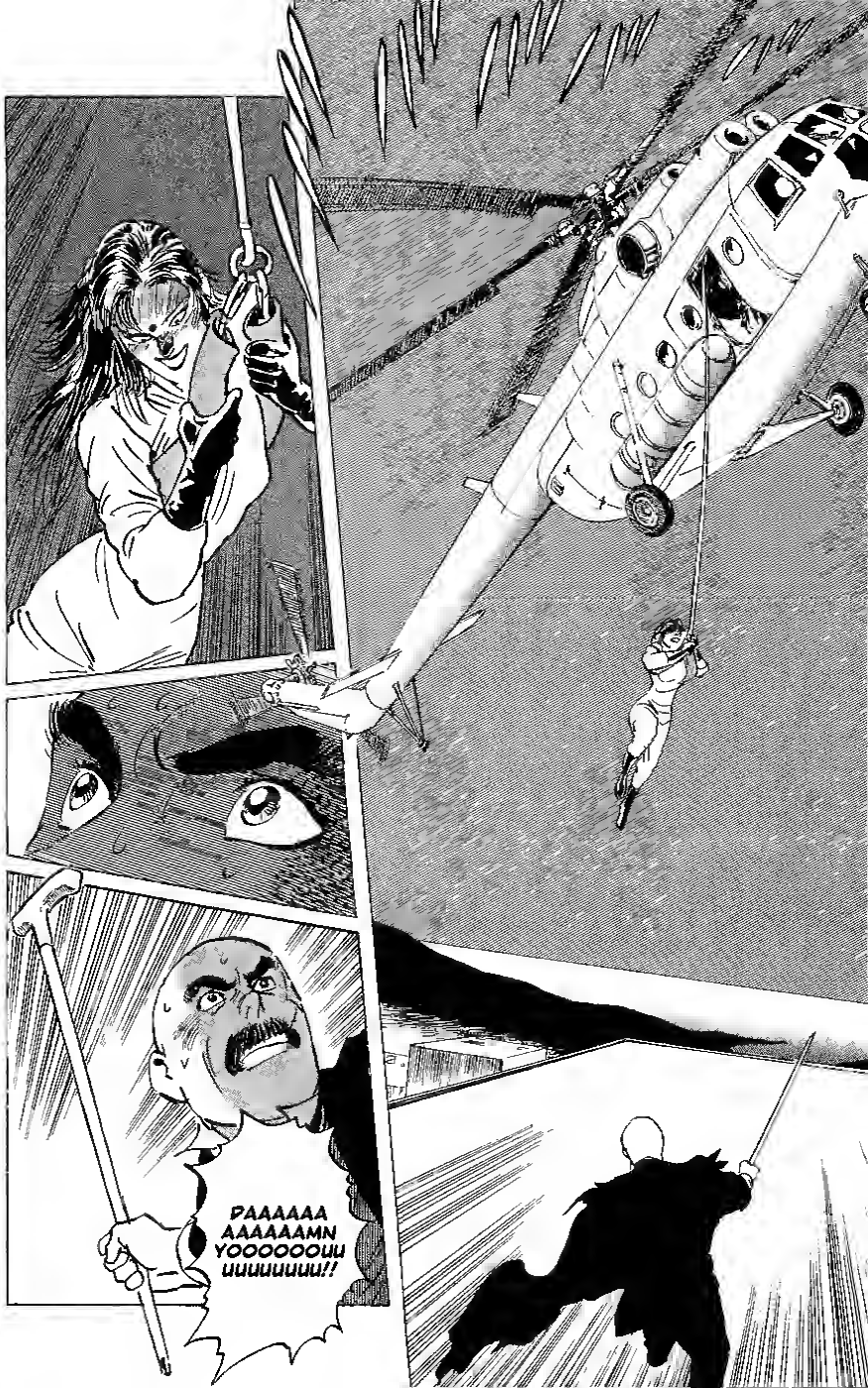

BY THIS, WE WILL TAKE THE ROT BY THE ROOT AND SEVER IT!

YOU FOOL! WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO GAIN FROM THIS!?

PLEASE CALM DOWN! THERE'S STILL NO DAMAGE YET!
120
THERE HASN'T EVEN BEEN AN OFFICIAL EVACUATION ORDER!
GO! HURRY! WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!
YOU THINK WE'LL BELIEVE YOU? NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ARE ALWAYS HIDING THE TRUTH!
IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD! EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF!

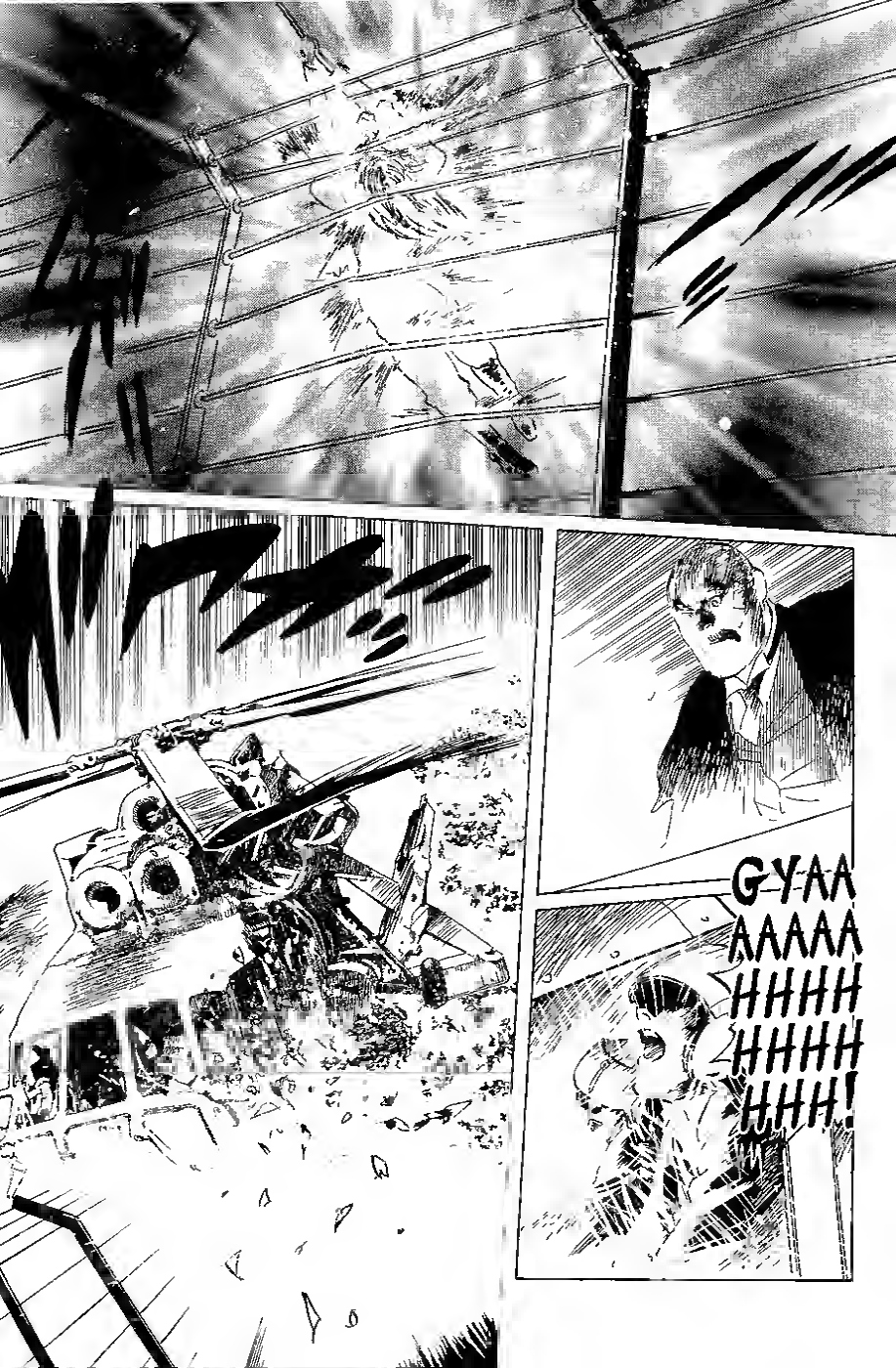

SIGN: QUARANTINE GATE
通遮断機
ハイイイ
ガー

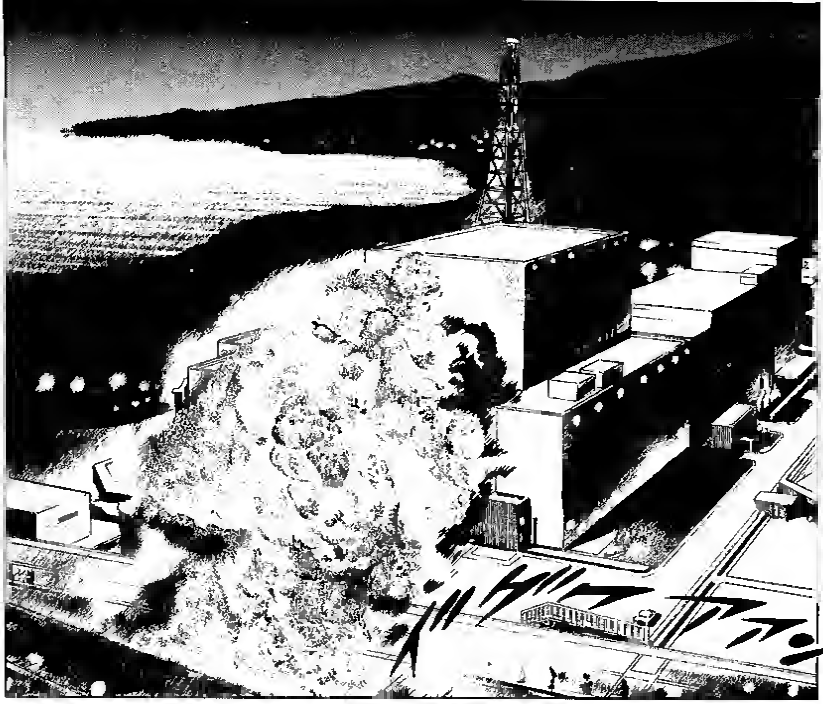
My prophecy will be fulfilled sooner or later, whether or not at my hands.
There are nuclear power plants throughout Japan. If an earthquake causes even one to go berserk, the end of the world will come.
IS THAT WHAT THE DAKINI YOU BELIEVE IN DESIRES!?
HAHAHA! DAKINI WILL DRINK OF THE BLOOD OF THE ROTTEN WORLD, AND GIVE BIRTH TO HER OWN SHANGRI-LA!
NOW THE WORLD WILL BE AS I DESIRE! ALL THOSE WHO ARE BETTER OFF DEAD WILL BE GONE!

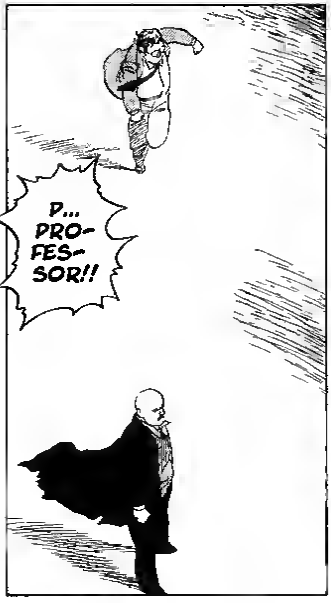

PAAAAAA
AAAAAAMN
YOOOOOOUU
UUUUUUUU!!

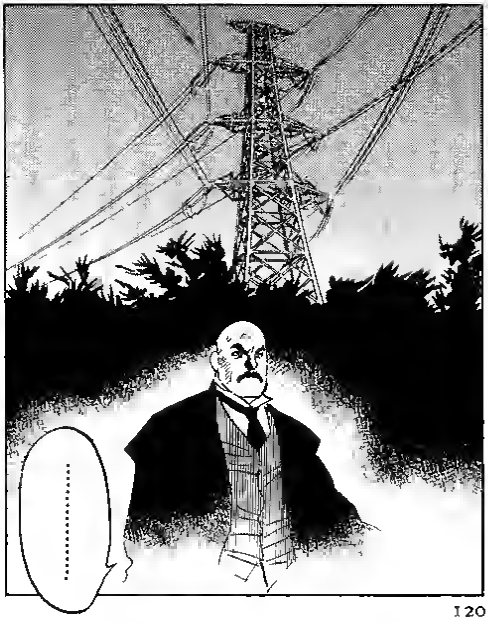
AH!
LEA-
DER!!
WAAA
AAUGH!

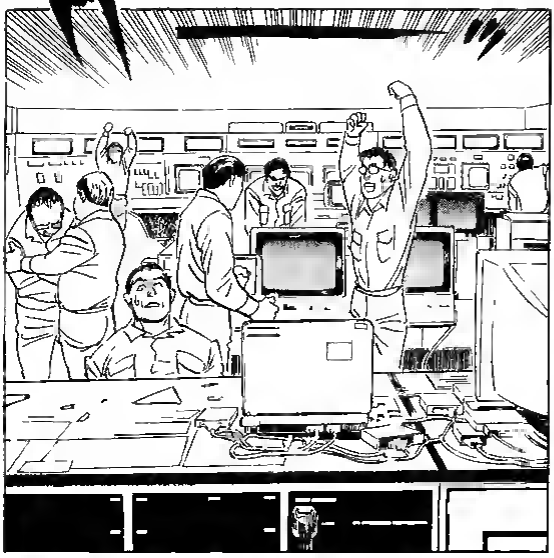
T...THE WIND'S TOO STRONG! WE'RE LOSING CONTROL...!!
WAAAAAAAAAA UUUUUUUUUUUU UGH!

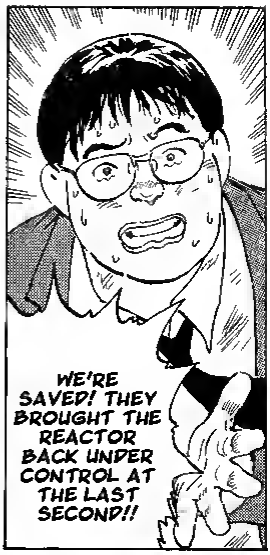

GYAA
AAAAA
HHHH
HHHH
HHH!

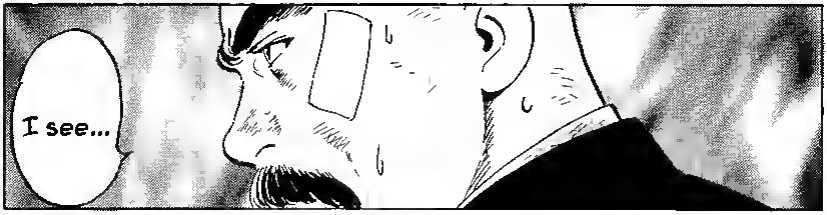



P... PRO- FES- SOR!!

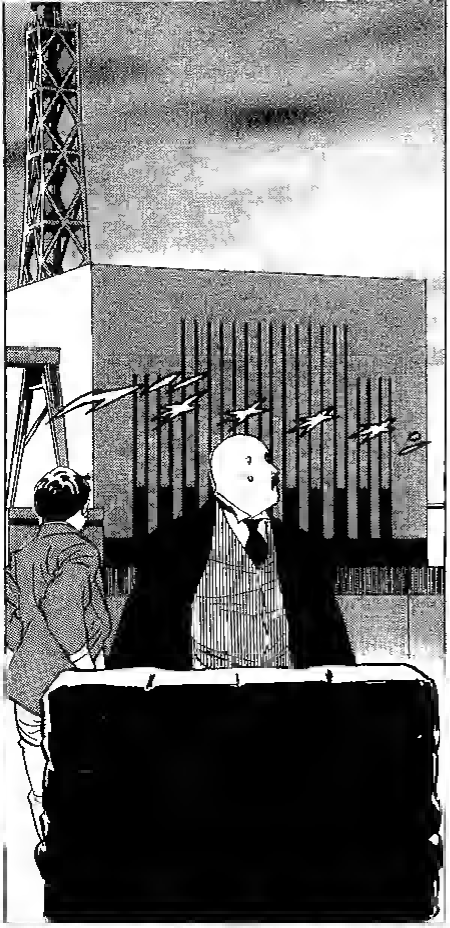


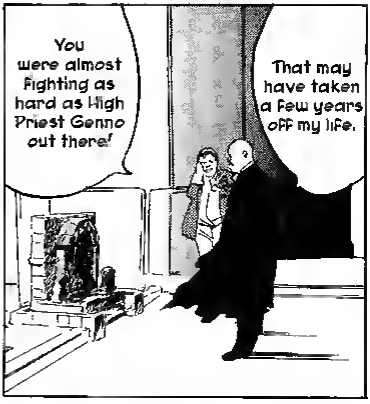


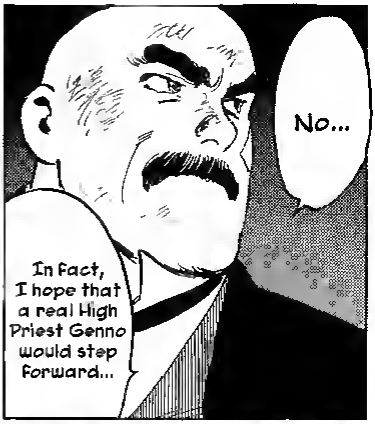

WE'RE SAVED! THEY BROUGHT THE REACTOR BACK UNDER CONTROL AT THE LAST SECOND!!

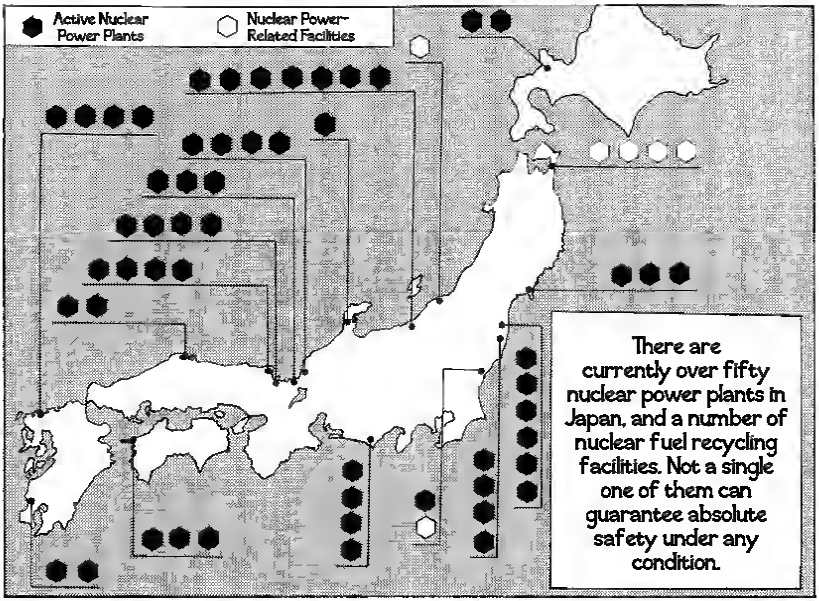

I see...

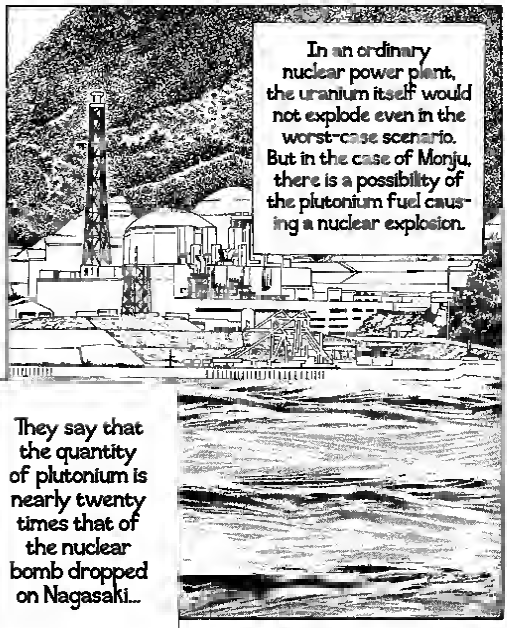
.There is a possibility that a considerable amount of radiation was temporarily leaked. All people inside the plant, please assemble so we may measure your exposure levels.



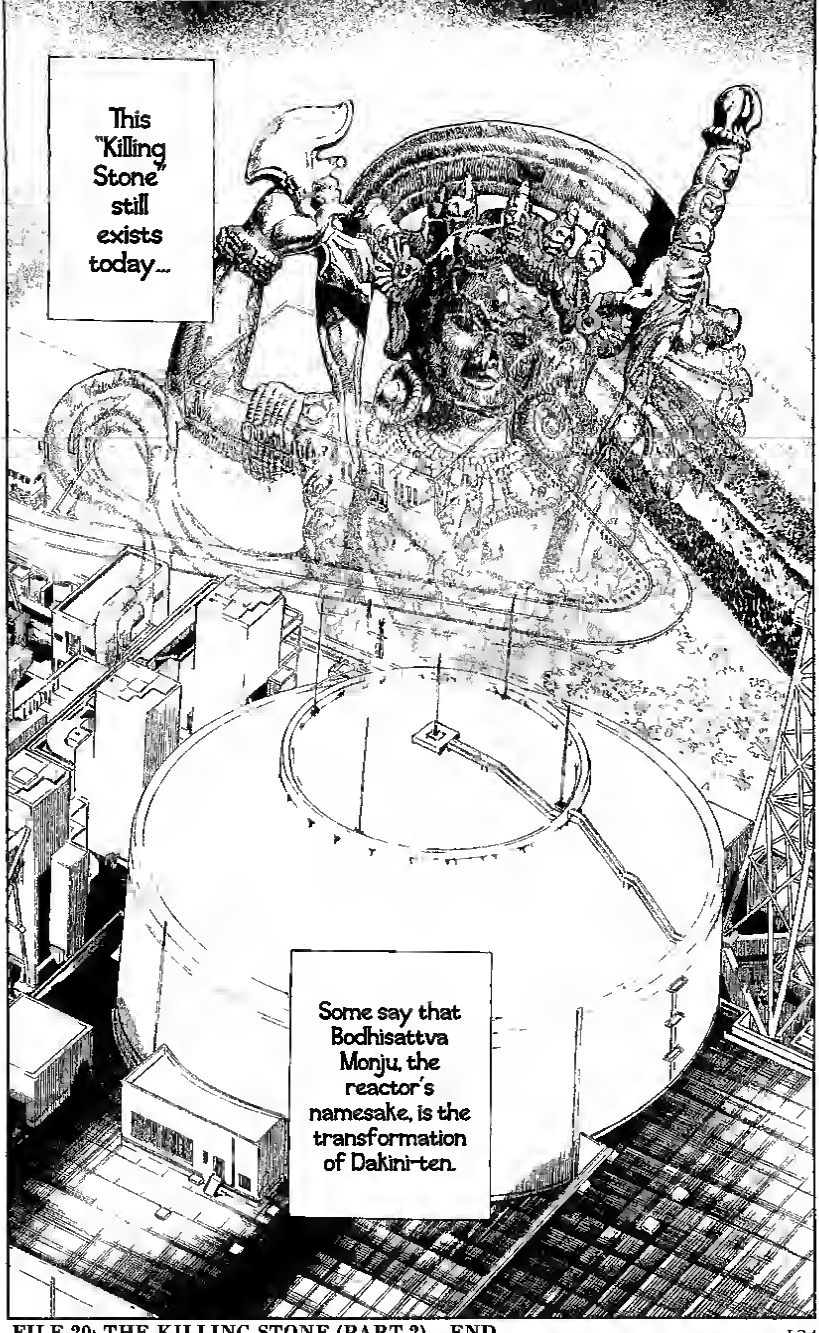

You were almost fighting as hard as High Priest Genno out there!
That may have taken a few years off my life.


No...
In fact, I hope that a real High Priest Genno would step forward...


Active Nuclear Power Plants
Nuclear Power-Related Facilities
There are currently over fifty nuclear power plants in Japan, and a number of nuclear fuel recycling facilities. Not a single one of them can guarantee absolute safety under any condition.


In an ordinary nuclear power plant, the uranium itself would not explode even in the worst-case scenario. But in the case of Monju, there is a possibility of the plutonium fuel causing a nuclear explosion.
They say that the quantity of plutonium is nearly twenty times that of the nuclear bomb dropped on Nagasaki...

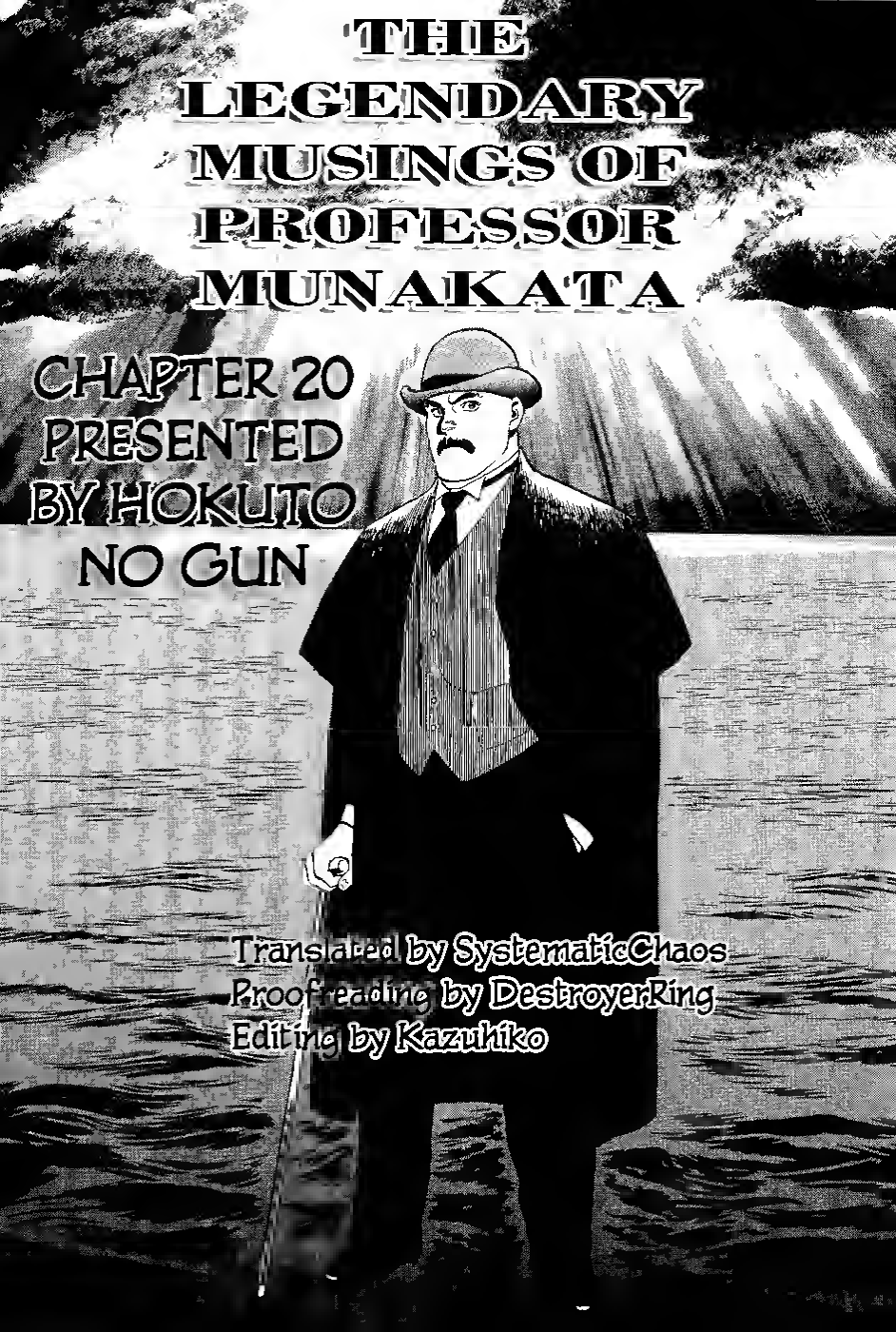
Among them, the Fast Breeder Reactor "Monju" in Wakasa Bay, Fukui Prefecture, has been identified as unsafe from its initial construction.


This "Killing Stone" still exists today...
Some say that Bodhisattva Monju, the reactor's namesake, is the transformation of Dakini-ten.

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

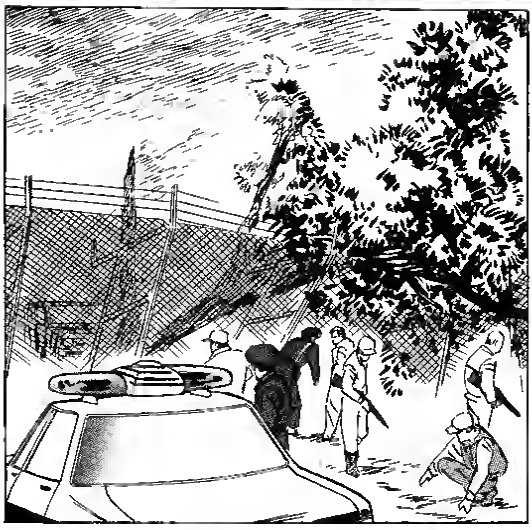
CHAPTER 20

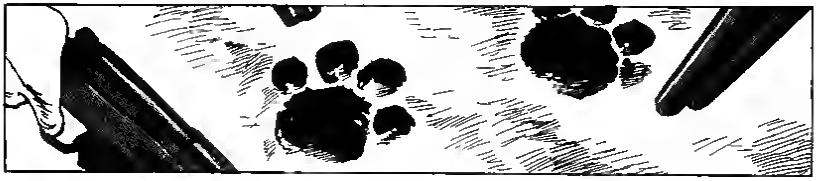
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



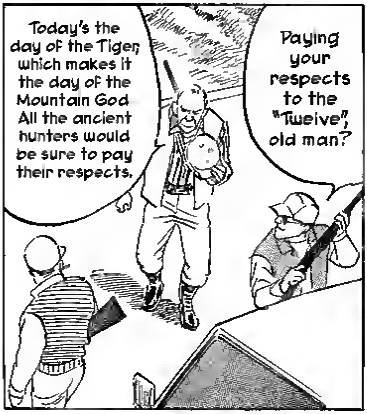
Translated by SystematicChaos
Proofreading by DestroyerRing
Editing by Kazuhiko

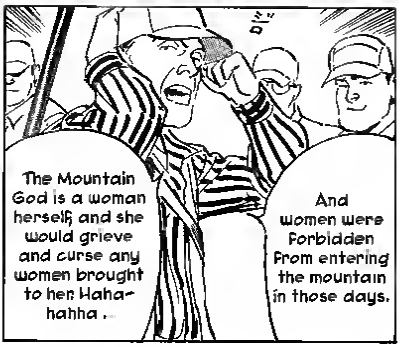
File 21:
The Jomon Tiger

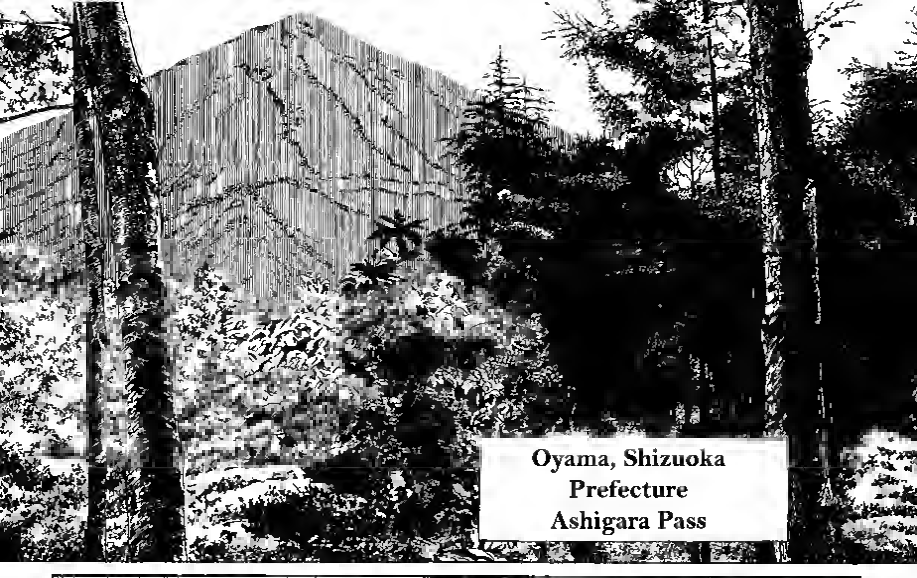




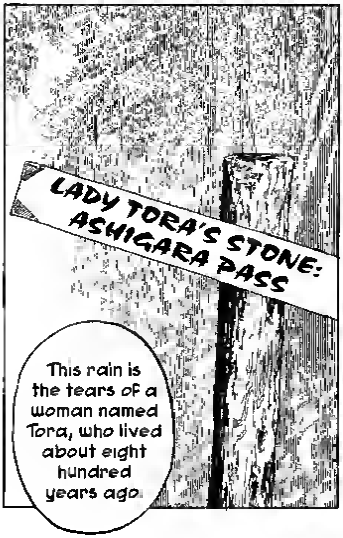
Make sure you act in groups! Never act alone! If you find it, radio it in and await instructions from the police helicopter! Got it!?


Today's the day of the Tiger, which makes it the day of the Mountain God. All the ancient hunters would be sure to pay their respects.
Paying your respects to the "Twelve", old man?


The Mountain God is a woman herself, and she would grieve and curse any women brought to her. Haha-hahha...
And women were forbidden from entering the mountain in those days.


Oyama, Shizuoka
Prefecture
Ashigara Pass

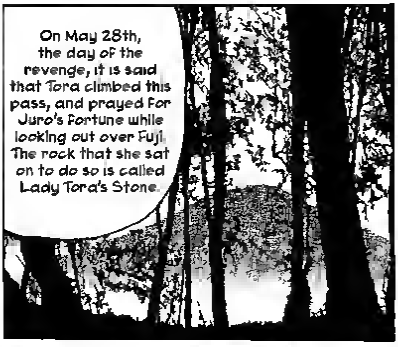
"Tora's rain"...


LADY TORA'S STONE: ASHIGARA PASS
This rain is the tears of a woman named Tora, who lived about eight hundred years ago.

What's that?
It's May 28th according to the old calendar, so that's what they call the rain that falls in this region at about this time.

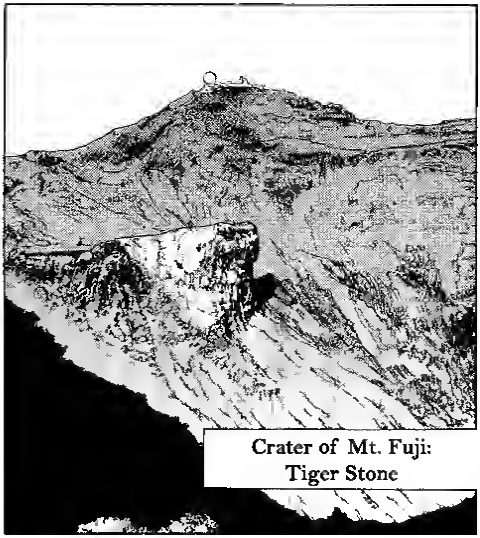
This was the famous Revenge of the Soga
When the Kamakura shogun Minamoto-no-Yoritomo was hunting at the foot of Mt. Fuji, his retainer Kudo Suketsune was slain by the Soga Brothers.

Having fulfilled his revenge, the elder brother Soga Juro was promptly cut down. Juro's lover was a prostitute from Oiso named Tora

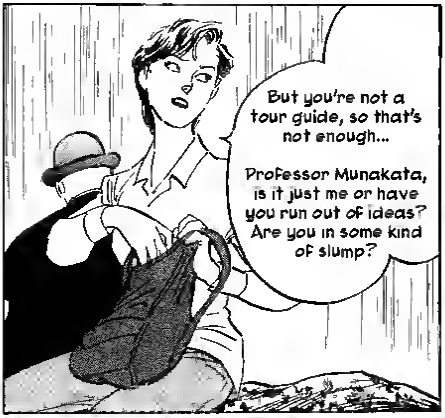

On May 28th, the day of the revenge, it is said that Tora climbed this pass, and prayed for Juro's fortune while looking out over Fuji. The rock that she sat on to do so is called Lady Tora's Stone

That would seem to be it.

Look, Professor Munakata..
Click!
But tigers aren't native to Japan, Miss Ike...
Yaaa aaaa aaaw n...
Just because this year's Zodiac series is themed around the Tiger, you can't just get out of it with a little story of Lady Tora's stone, you know?
The magazine needs an ancient history or a legendary story!
At Kitora Burial Mound in Nara, there is the White Tiger depicted as one of the Four Sacred Beasts, meaning that the appearance of the tiger was already known by then, but these were no more than borrowed images from the continent.
Hea-ver-ho!
You can search all the ancient literature, and you may find records of tiger fur or live tigers imported from the continent, but that's it. There are no folk legends of them.


Crater of Mt. Fuji:
Tiger Stone

But there is an oddly large number of things in Shizuoka Prefecture that are associated with tigers, so I figured it wouldn't hurt to tour them


But you're not a tour guide, so that's not enough...
Professor Munakata, is it just me or have you run out of ideas? Are you in some kind of slump?

South Izu, Koina's
Tiger Dance

HHH
AIIIIEEEEE EEEEEEE!
WA AA AU GH!
IT'S BEEN SIGHTED IN THE VICINITY OF GOTENBA! IT MUST HAVE RUN TOWARD MT. ASHIGARA! HURRY!

There are a number of stones dotting the land from Tohoku to Kyushu, named "Lady Tora's Stone" or "Tiger's Stone" or the like.
I've actually tried narrowing my study down to them, but I still can't quite understand, Miss Ike.
I find it hard to believe that they are all related to the story of Lady Tora, and while Yanagita Kunio hypothesized an organization of mediums named "Tiger", that doesn't explain it, either.
Speaking of stones, why don't we go see a tiger fossil they excavated here in Shizuoka?
Tiger Fossil?
Perhaps the Tiger's Stone existed from even long before that, under a different system of faith...

They found them in areas like Mitsukabi and Hamakita, where they had excavated human bones of stone-age people.
But I thought you said there weren't any...
There were in prehistoric times.
I fear that the Japanese tiger went extinct after the sea level rose and the archipelago was isolated ten-odd thousand years ago...
They must have lived alongside the ancestors of the Japanese.
They may have migrated during the last Ice Age, about twenty to eighteen thousand years ago, when the sea level lowered and Japan was connected to the continent.

There seems to be a commotion over there.
I hope there's a bus or a taxi passing by...

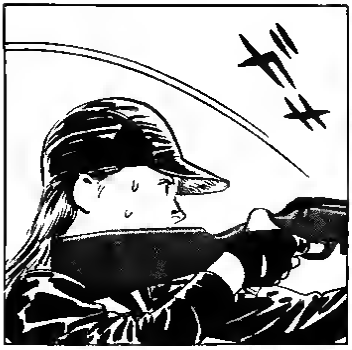
ヒヒーン!
ガシャン
ブロロロ

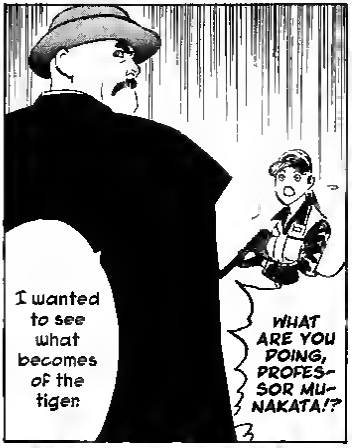
DON'T LET IT GET AWAY!!
.....

You alright?

But I was surprised. I thought I would paint myself this time around.
I left at dawn today when I was forced to go collect data.
Didn't you see the morning news? That tiger escaped from Fuji SaFari Park overnight.
The hunters from the hunting club are scared, too. That female tiger just got here from Siberia. It's still near-wild.
Well, I'm new at this... Is it that strange seeing a woman hunter?
You said your name was Yukari, right? Are you one of those... hunters, too?
No, I must thank you. I was at my wit's end in that rain. If you don't mind dropping me off at the nearest town...

!
ドン ドン
イヤッ
The tiger...!
Zzzz.


ドキ

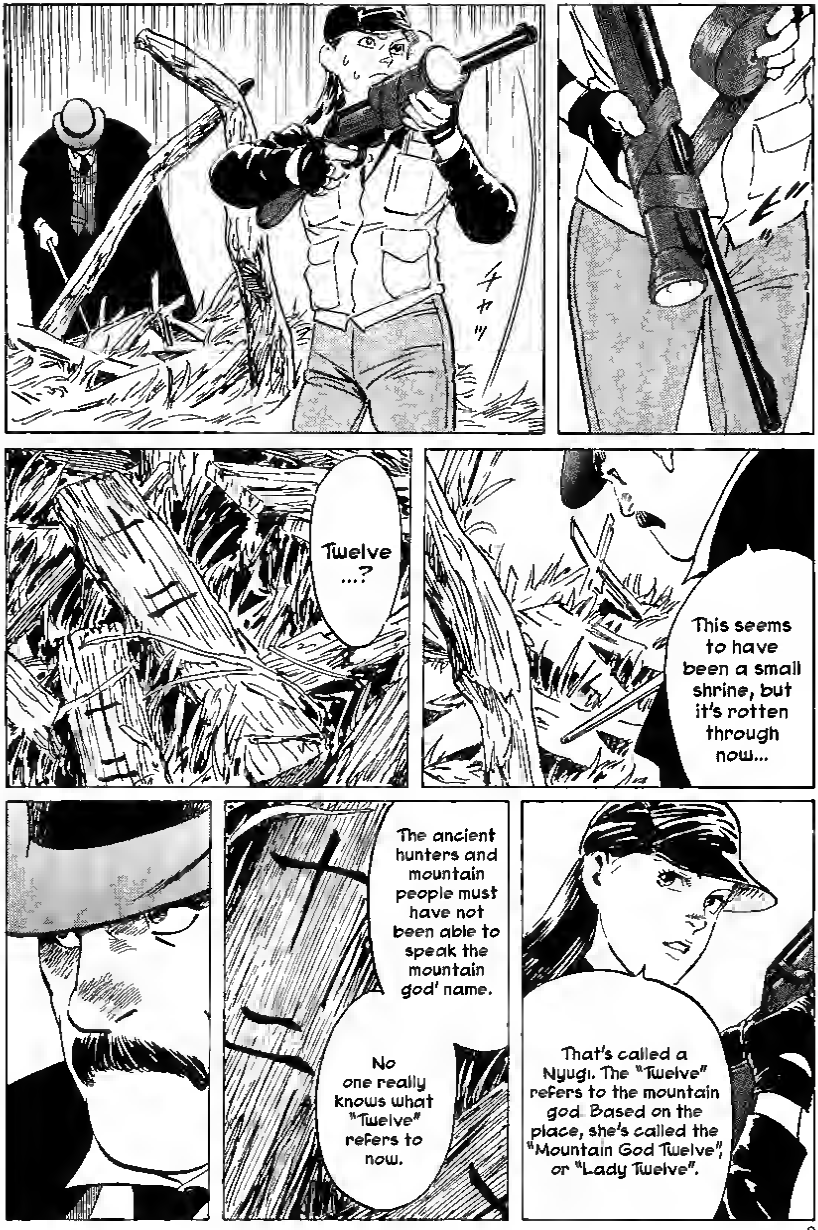

I wanted to see what becomes of the tiger.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, PROFESSOR MUNAKATA!?

BUT...
If I'm going to get in your way, then just go ahead of me.

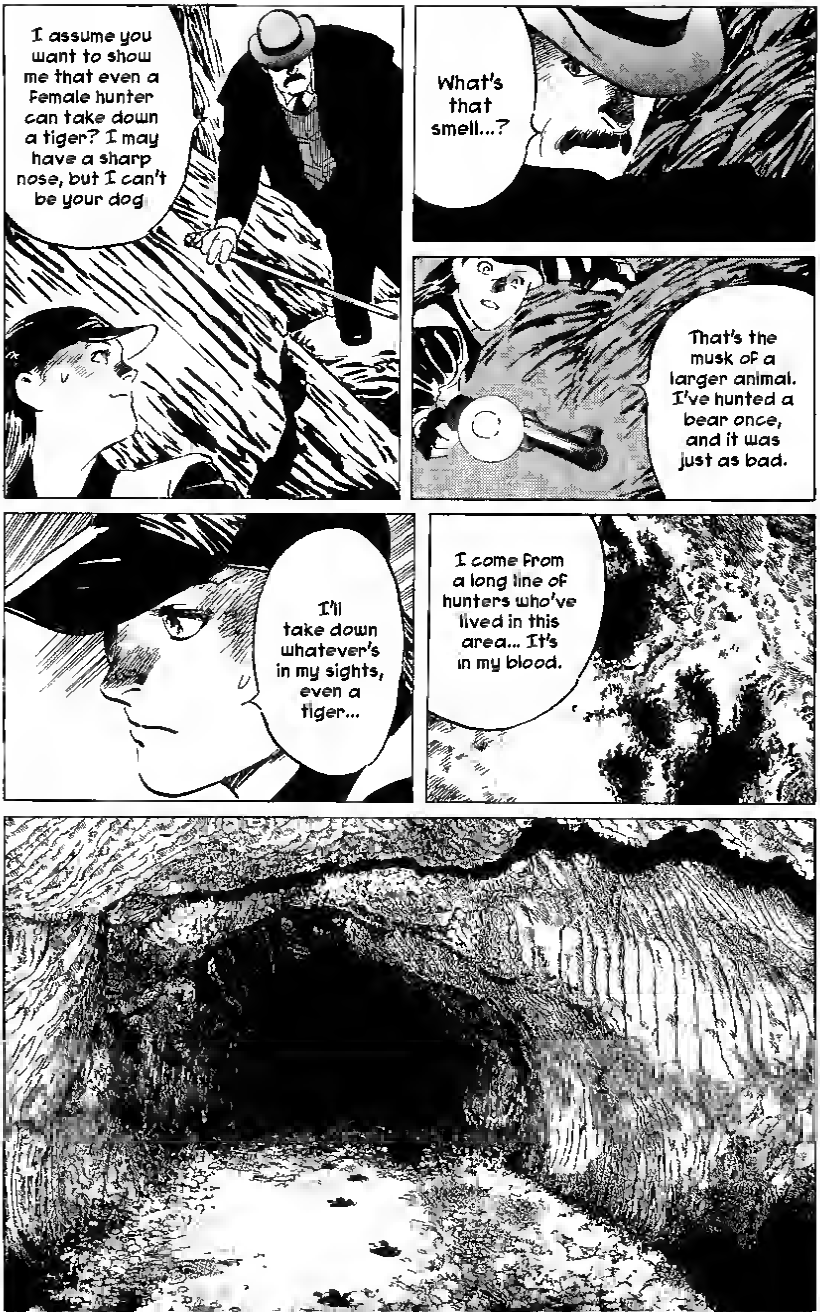
I've shot plenty of boars! Now if you're going to follow me, you've got to keep it down!
Are you sure you don't want to contact your hunter friends? You've never shot a tiger before.
.....
...Got it.
Tiger's aren't game animals! They themselves are terrifying hunters!
We have to approach them with extreme caution...
HA-YATA-RO!

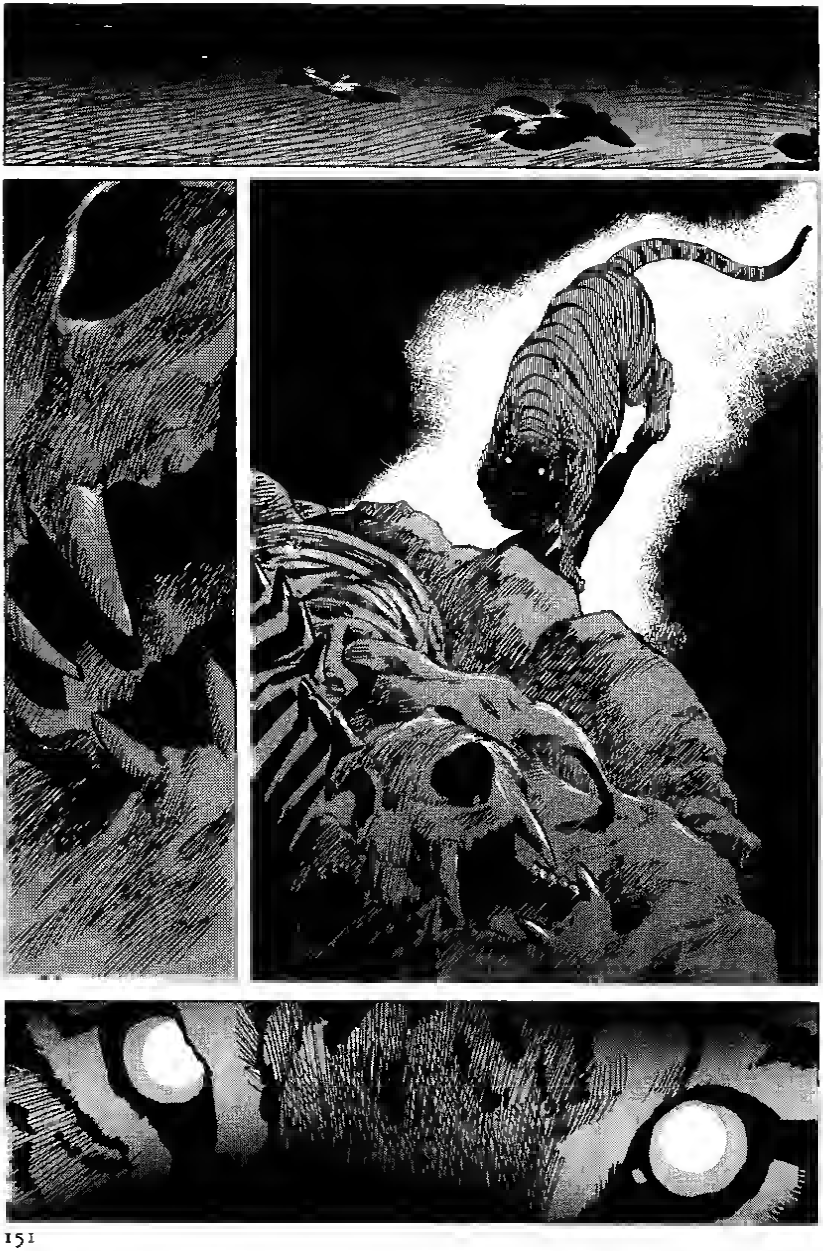
ROOOAA AAAAAA ARRRR!

HA-
YATA-
RO!!


Twelve ...?
This seems to have been a small shrine, but it's rotten through now...
The ancient hunters and mountain people must have not been able to speak the mountain god' name.
No one really knows what "Twelve" refers to now.
That's called a Nyugi. The "Twelve" refers to the mountain god. Based on the place, she's called the "Mountain God Twelve", or "Lady Twelve".

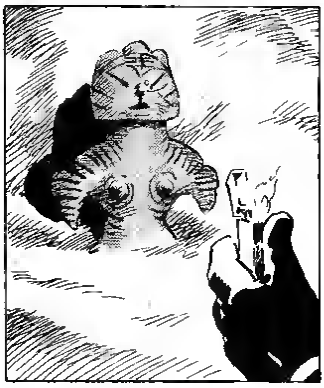
WE'VE LOST THE TIGER! WATCH YOURSELF AND FOLLOW US...
WHERE ARE YOU, YUKARI? COME IN!
It's broken.

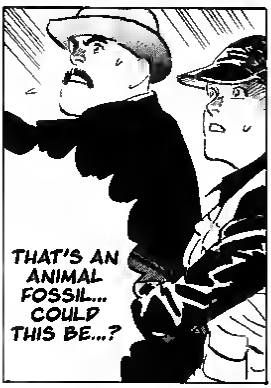

I assume you want to show me that even a female hunter can take down a tiger? I may have a sharp nose, but I can't be your dog
What's that smell...?
That's the musk of a larger animal. I've hunted a bear once, and it was just as bad.
I'll take down whatever's in my sights, even a tiger...
I come from a long line of hunters who've lived in this area... It's in my blood.



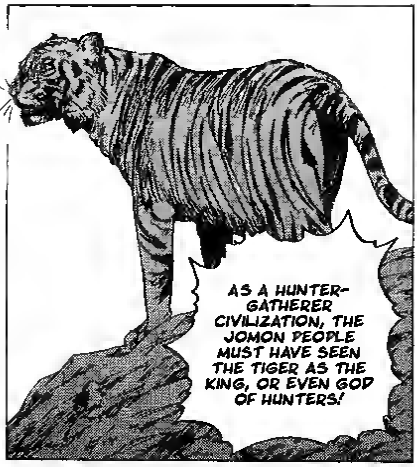
That's an old log. This doesn't seem to be any old cave...
About two or three thousand years ago...
So this space must have been preserved since... How long ago do you mean?
I've heard that the Gotenba area was once buried under a landslide from Mt. Fuji long ago.
That's the Jomon period...

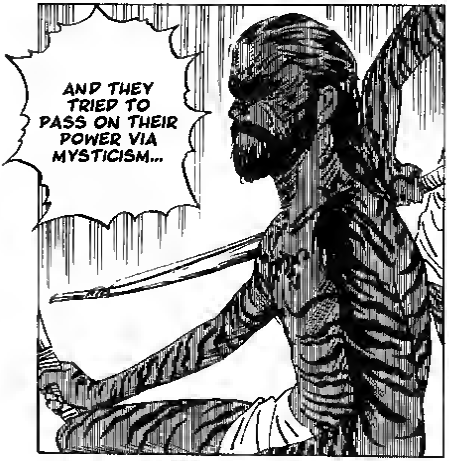
!

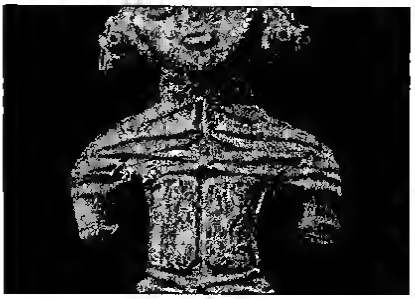


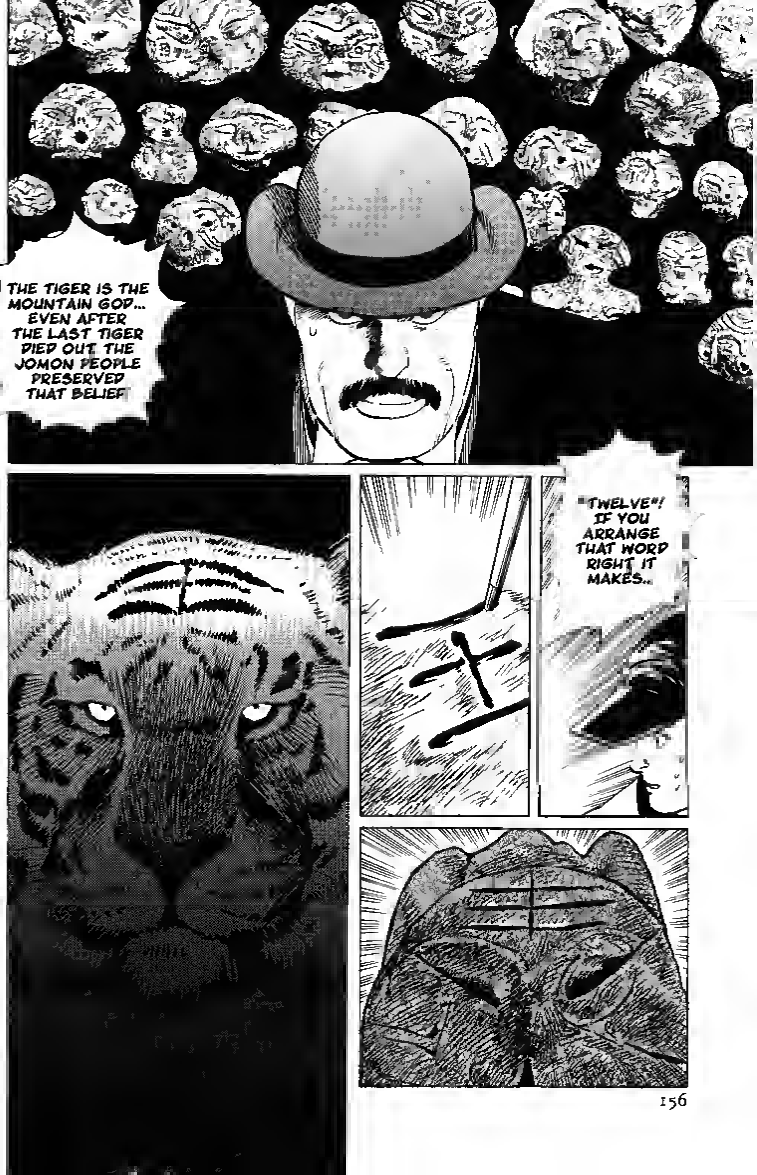

THAT'S AN ANIMAL FOSSIL... COULD THIS BE...?

A TIGER! THIS IS A TIGER!!
Then the Jomon people witnessed the last tigers!
If a number of the tigers that went extinct ten-odd thousand years ago still lived during the early Jomon period that began twelve thousand years ago...


AS A HUNTER-GATHERER CIVILIZATION, THE JOMON PEOPLE MUST HAVE SEEN THE TIGER AS THE KING, OR EVEN GOD OF HUNTERS!


AND THEY TRIED TO PASS ON THEIR POWER VIA MYSTICISM...



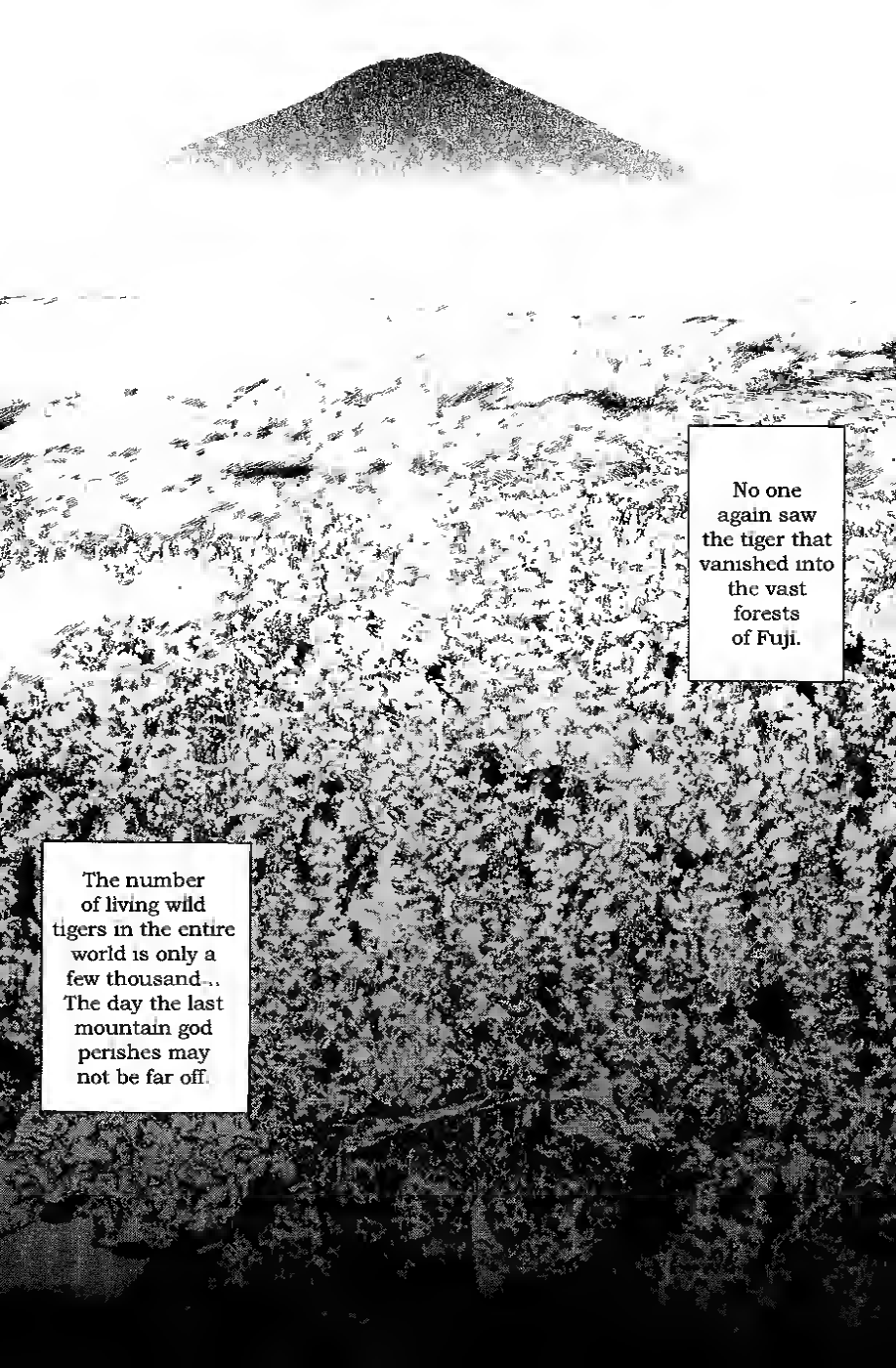

THE TIGER IS THE MOUNTAIN GOD... EVEN AFTER THE LAST TIGER DIED OUT THE JOMON PEOPLE PRESERVED THAT BELIEF
"TWELVE"! IF YOU ARRANGE THAT WORD RIGHT IT MAKES..

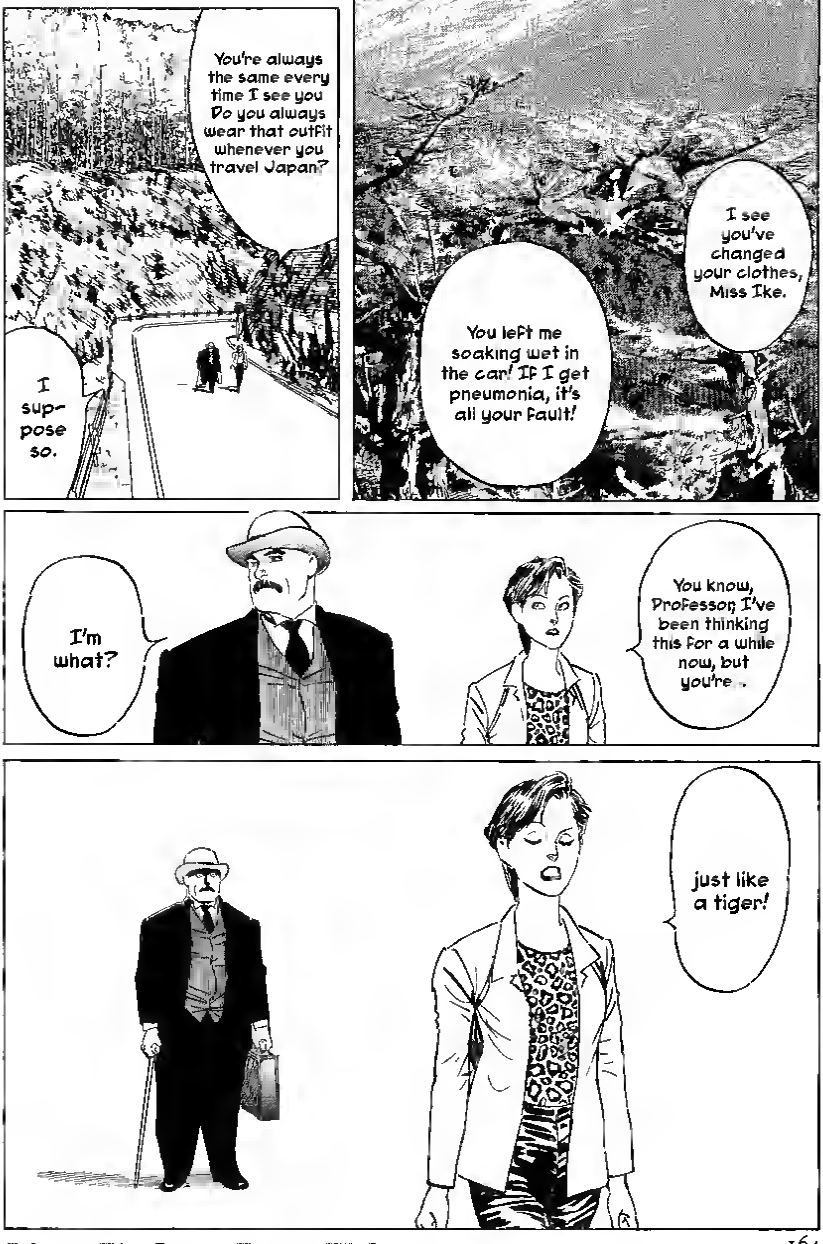
AND THIS IS THE "TIGER'S STONE"...

THERE IT IS!
SHOOT IT DOWN BEFORE IT GETS TO THE TREES!

.....
ROOOAAAAAAR
RRRRRRRRRRR!

She wanted to give birth in the forest...
That tiger was pregnant. I could tell somehow.
I see. So the mountain god is a woman...
And they give birth to twelve children a year.
P.. Pro-fessor Muna-kata..
A-CHOO !!


No one again saw the tiger that vanished into the vast forests of Fuji.
The number of living wild tigers in the entire world is only a few thousand... The day the last mountain god perishes may not be far off.

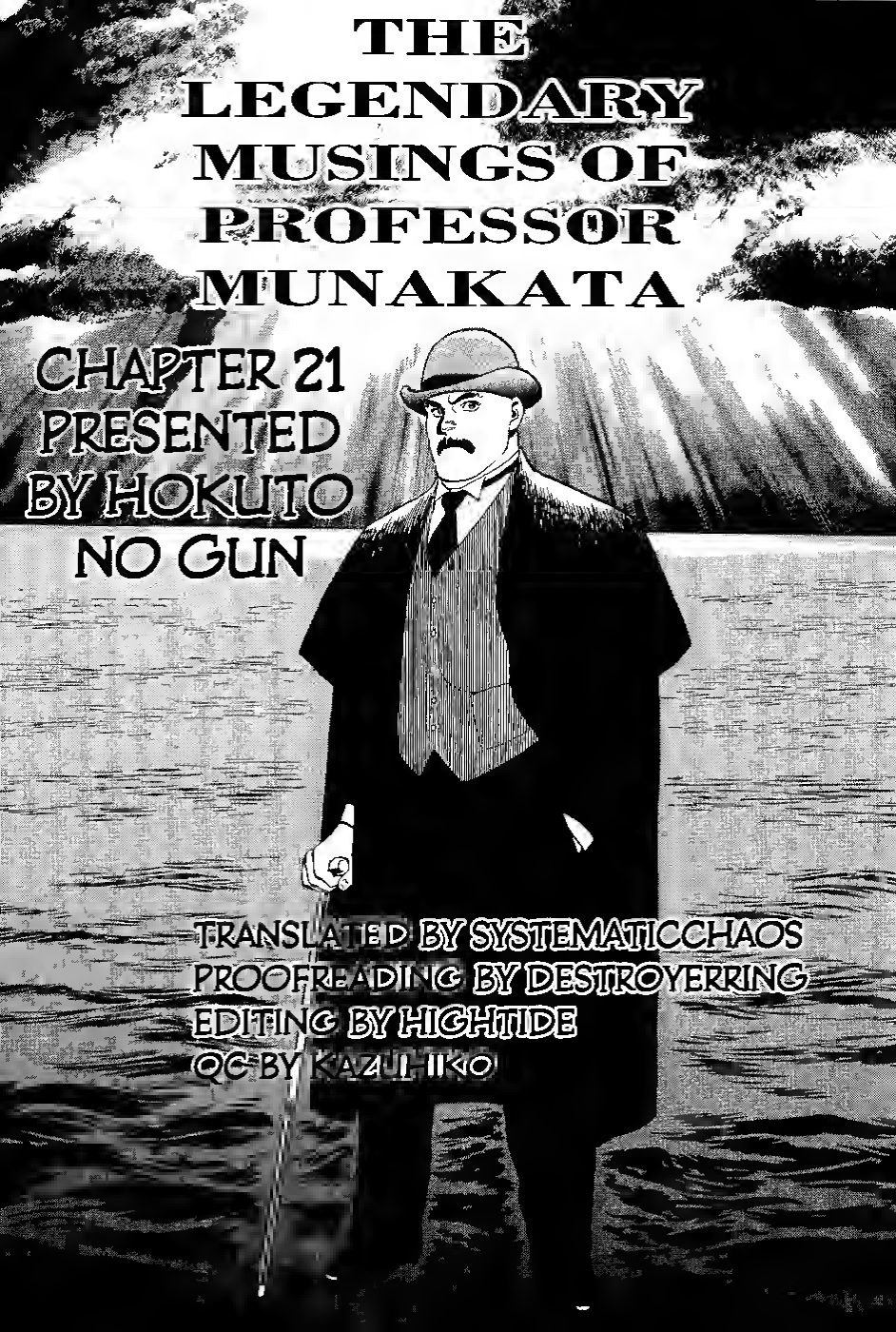

You're always the same every time I see you Do you always wear that outfit whenever you travel Japan?
I suppose so.
I see you've changed your clothes, Miss Ike.
You left me soaking wet in the car! If I get pneumonia, it's all your fault!
I'm what?
You know, Professor, I've been thinking this for a while now, but you're
just like a tiger!

File 21: The Jomon Tiger – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

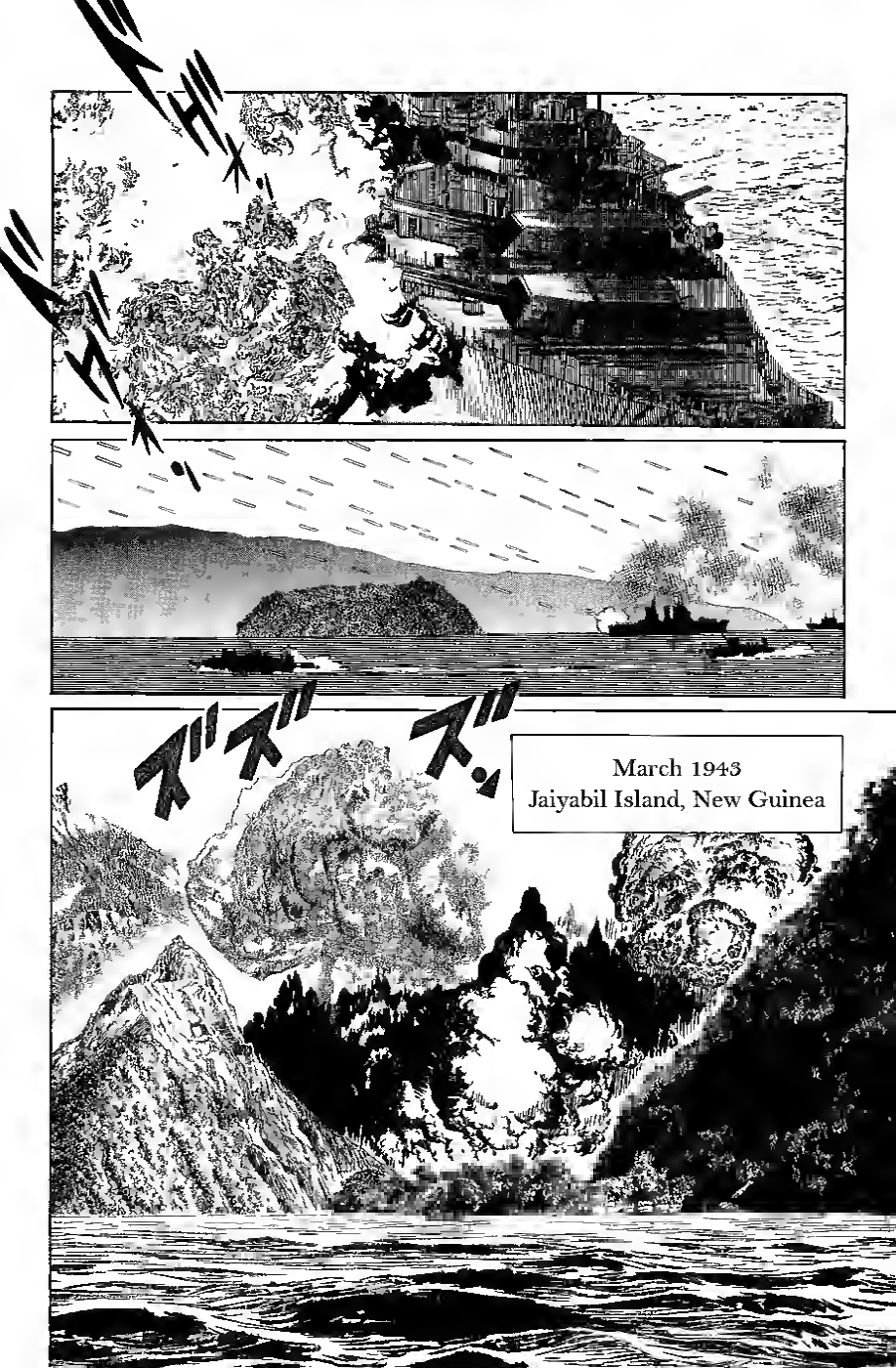
CHAPTER 21

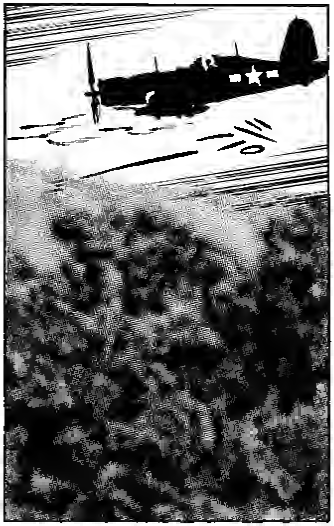
PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN

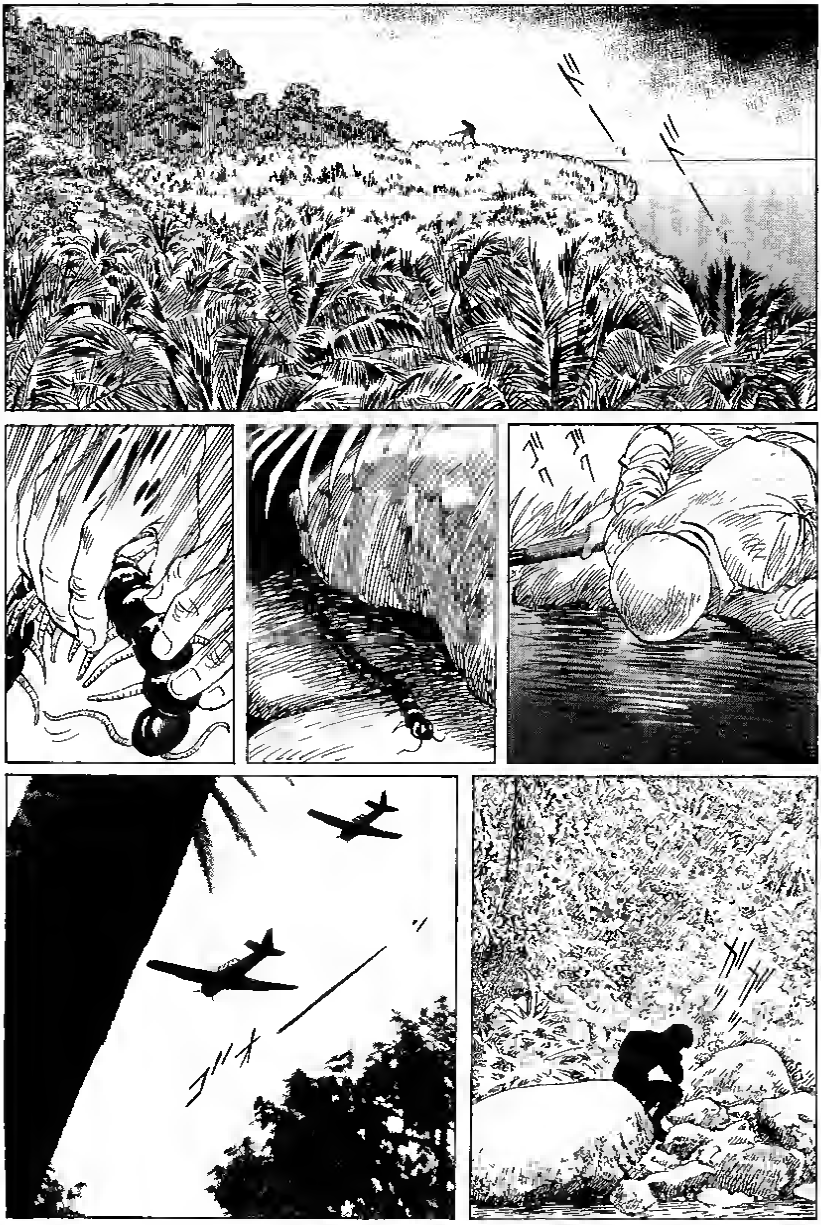


TRANSLATED BY SYSTEMATICCHAOS
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

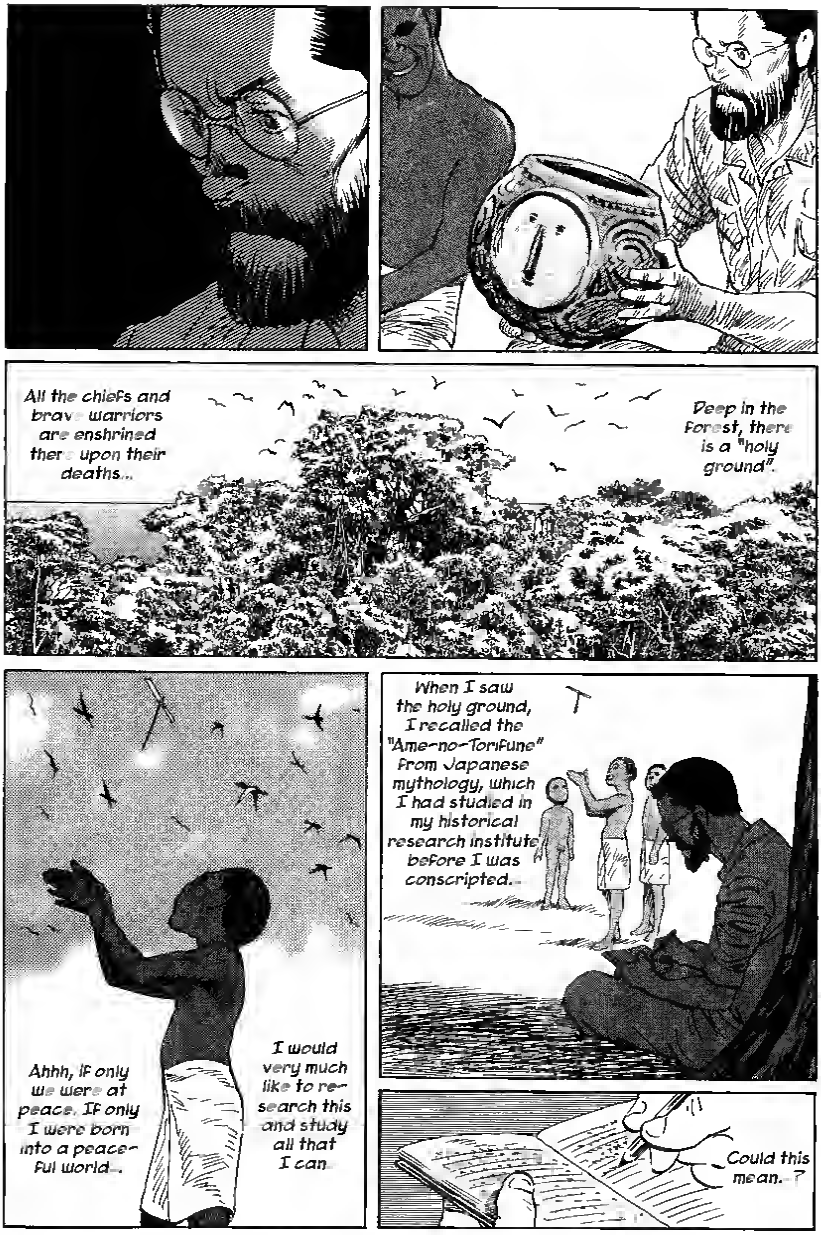
File 22:
Land of the Ancestors


ズズズ
March 1943
Jaiyabil Island, New Guinea

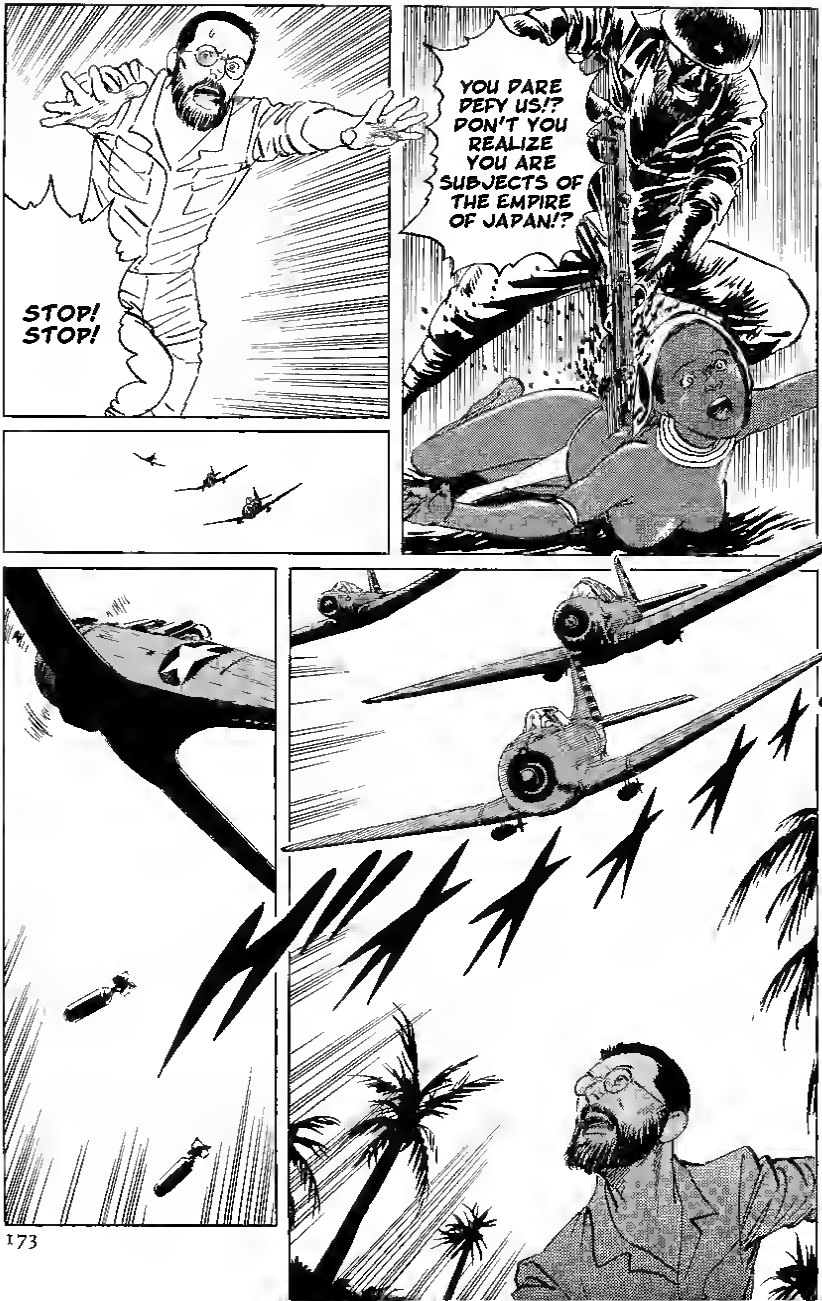


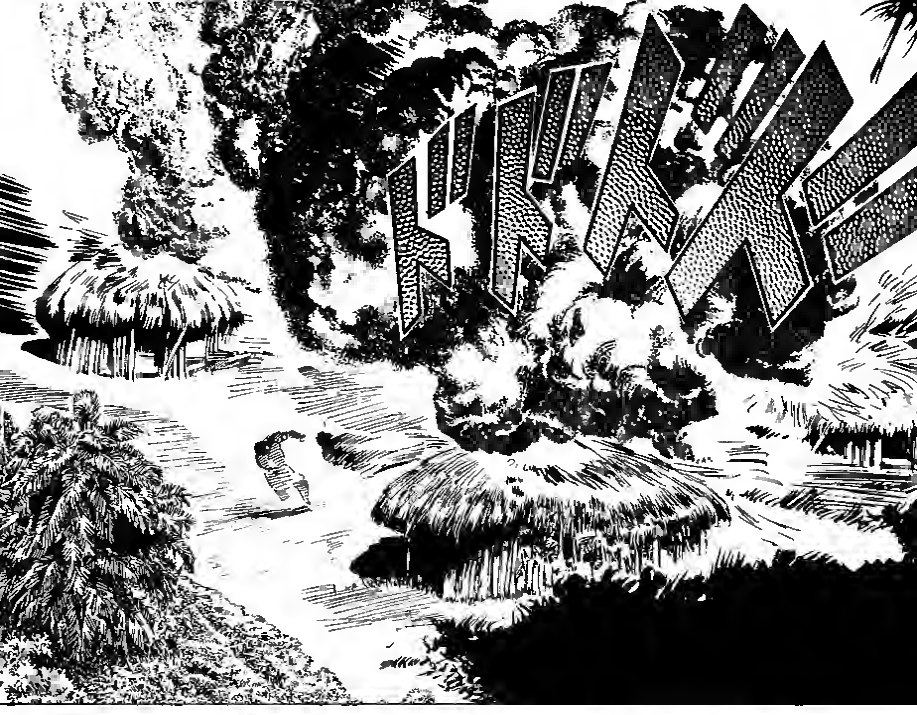

ミーン ミン
デン デン
ゴーオ

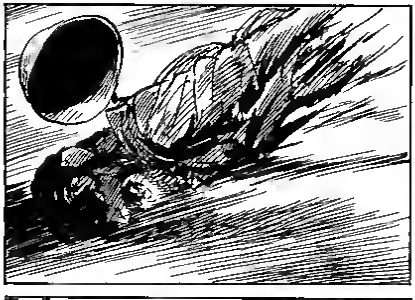
Kaamula... Shiro...
Kawamura Shiro...
Bigarole.
What's your name, kid?
Mmm.. Bigarole
The Japanese army has turned this island into a battleground. They have every reason to hate me.
I wonder how my family on the mainland is. I haven't felt like this for a long time. It's all thanks to these villagers for treating me like a guest.


All the chiefs and brave warriors are enshrined there upon their deaths...
Deep in the forest, there is a "holy ground".
Ahhh, if only we were at peace. If only I were born into a peaceful world...
I would very much like to research this and study all that I can.
When I saw the holy ground, I recalled the "Ame-no-ToriFune" from Japanese mythology, which I had studied in my historical research institute before I was conscripted...
Could this mean...?

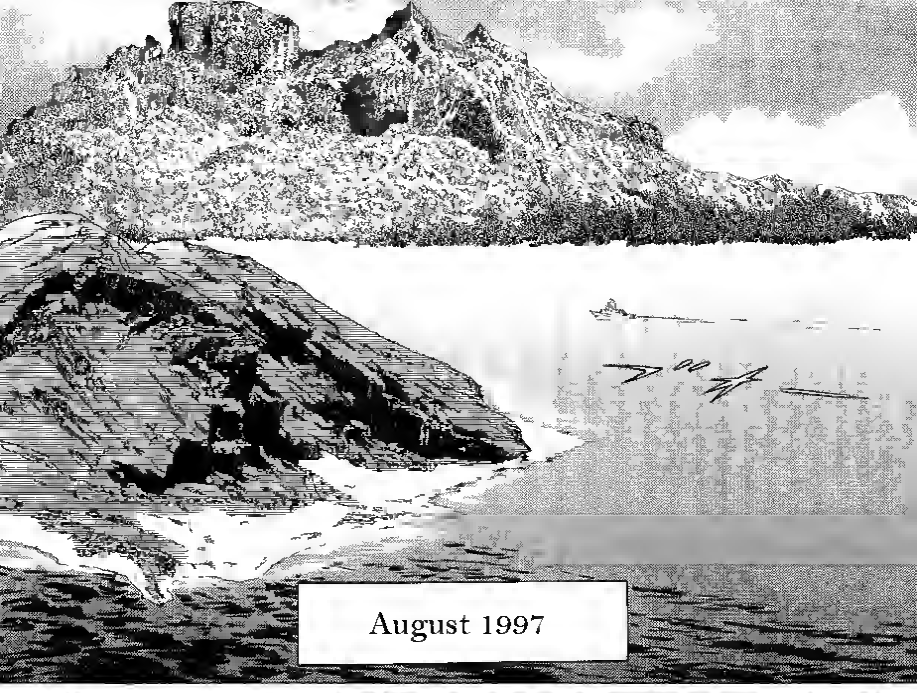
B...BRING OUT YOUR FOOD! WE ARE FIGHTING TO PROTECT YOUR ISLAND!
KAA-MULA!

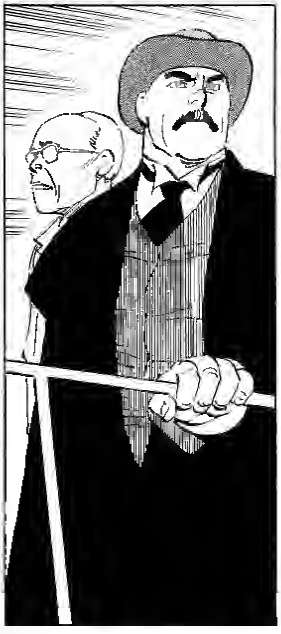

STOP!
STOP!
YOU DARE DEFY US!? DON'T YOU REALIZE YOU ARE SUBJECTS OF THE EMPIRE OF JAPAN!?

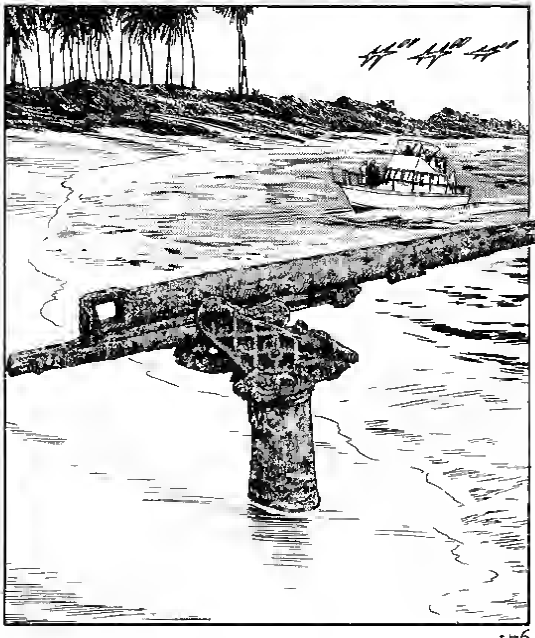

KRAK



KAAM-
ULA...!
KAAM-
ULA!!
Ame-no...
Torifune...
KAA-
MULA!
KAA-
MULA!

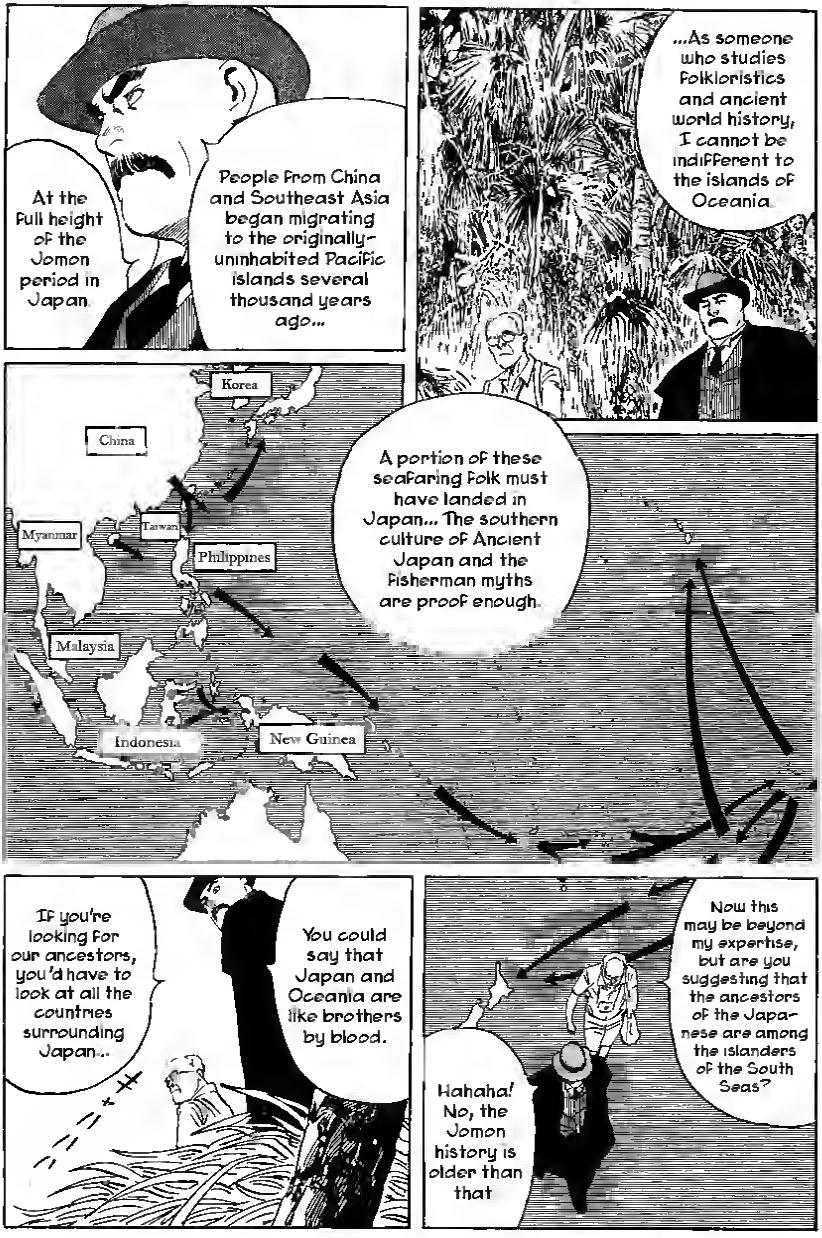

August 1997

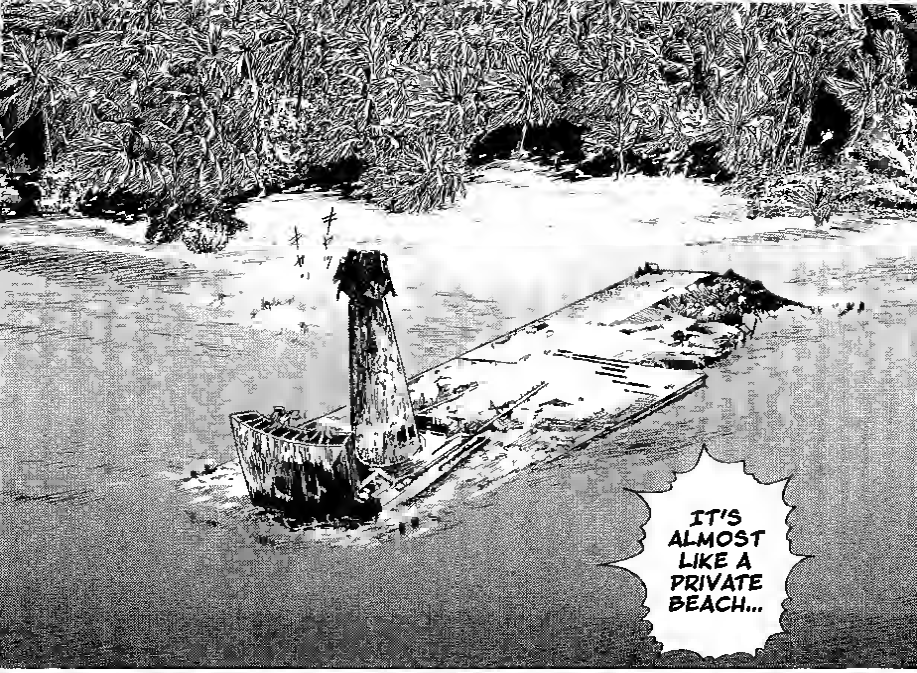


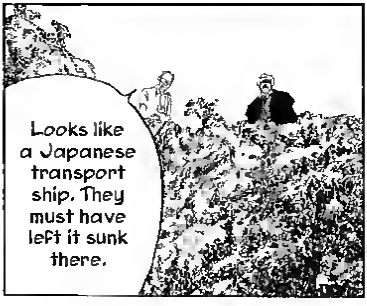


Thank you, Munakata
I guess that means we old men will have to come ashore all wet...
Aha ha...
Okay, we're here! Can't let you young ladies get all wet!
OK, OK.
I have other passengers. I will be back for you this evening, OK?
I suppose I should be grateful just for the fact that she accompanied me to the island...
Be careful, Namiko!
PAPA! I'M GOING SWIMMING WITH MY FRIENDS ON THE BEACH OVER THERE!

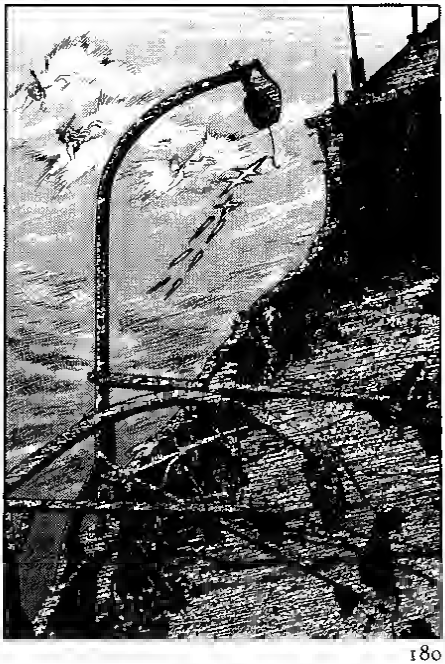
I know you were in the area for the World Folkloristics Assembly in Sydney, but I'm sorry for dragging you along with me.
Oh, no. I had some spare time in my schedule, so this was just right for me, President
Please, don't call me President anymore.
I have retired from the presidency of East Asia University of Culture last spring, and I'm finally enjoying my freedom
I always wanted to visit this island once in my life, even if I didn't find anything... Call it closure if you will...

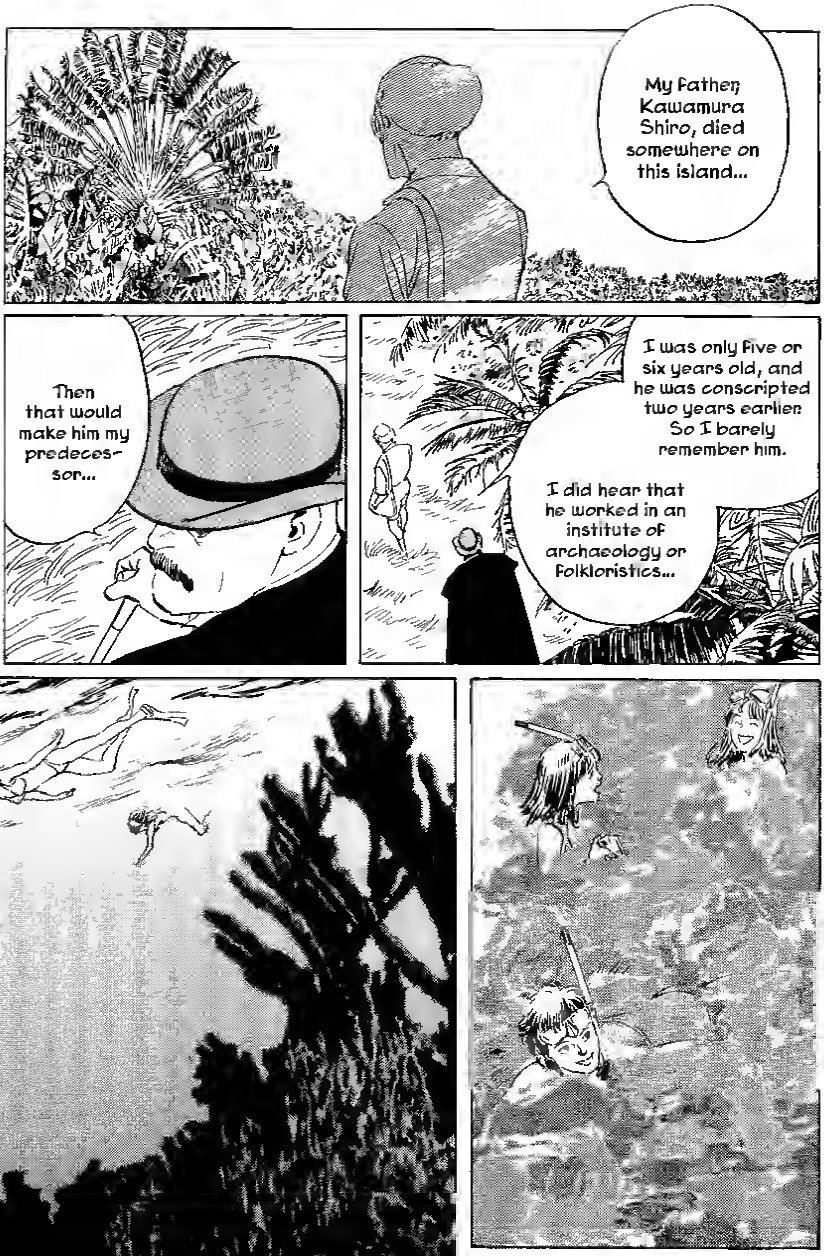

At the full height of the Jomon period in Japan
People from China and Southeast Asia began migrating to the originally-uninhabited Pacific islands several thousand years ago...
...As someone who studies folkloristics and ancient world history, I cannot be indifferent to the islands of Oceania
Korea
China
Myanmar
Taiwan
Philippines
Malaysia
Indonesia
New Guinea
A portion of these seafaring folk must have landed in Japan... The southern culture of Ancient Japan and the fisherman myths are proof enough.
If you're looking for our ancestors, you'd have to look at all the countries surrounding Japan...
You could say that Japan and Oceania are like brothers by blood.
Hahaha! No, the Jomon history is older than that
Now this may be beyond my expertise, but are you suggesting that the ancestors of the Japanese are among the islanders of the South Seas?

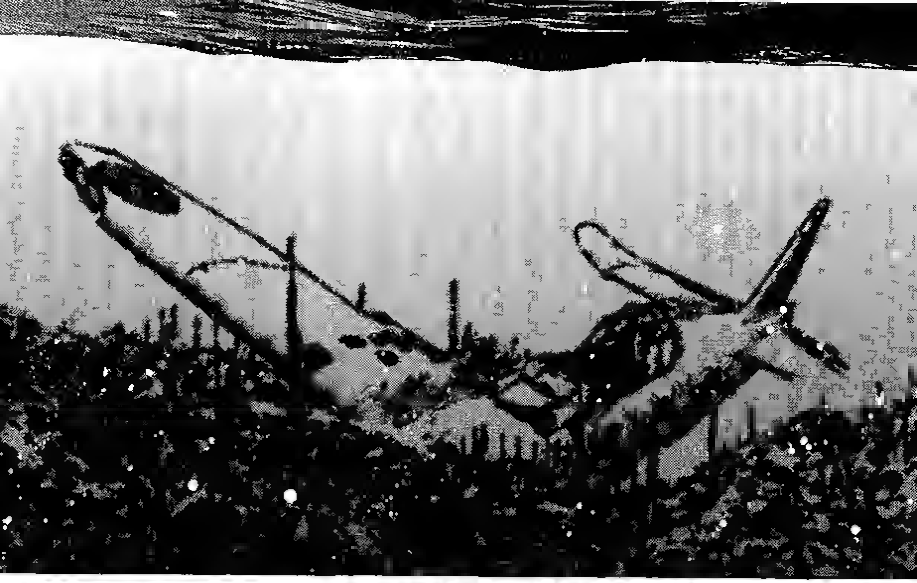

IT'S ALMOST LIKE A PRIVATE BEACH...

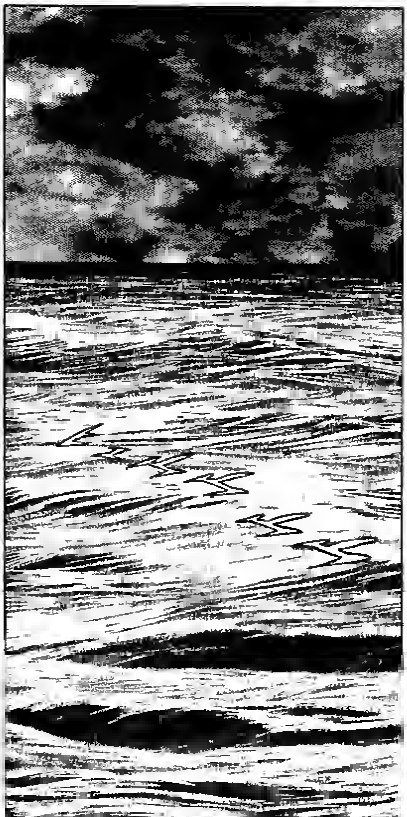

Looks like a Japanese transport ship. They must have left it sunk there.

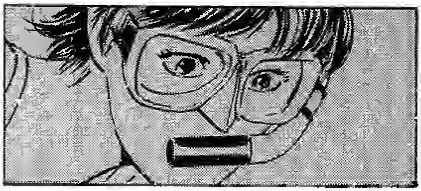
The American army cut off all the supply routes. The island garrison would often collapse of hunger or fever before battle...



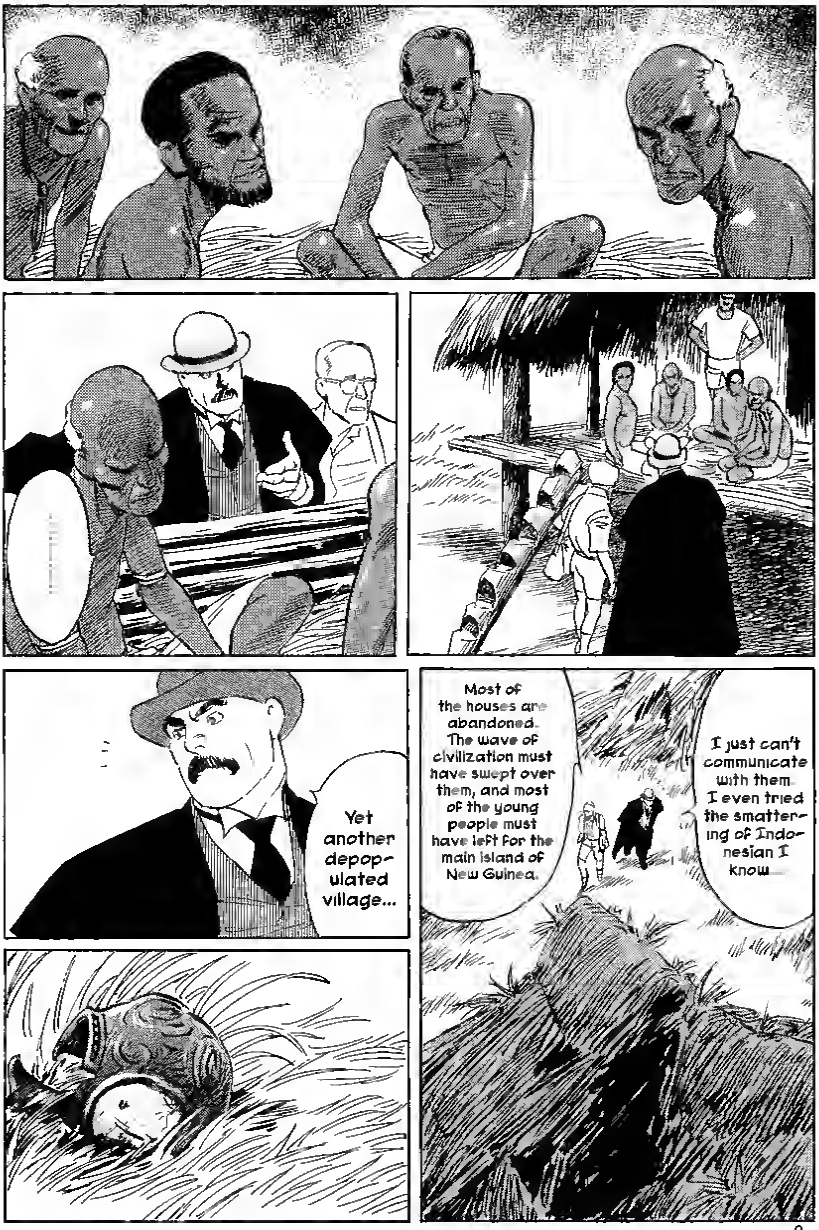

My father, Kawamura Shiro, died somewhere on this island...
Then that would make him my predecessor...
I was only five or six years old, and he was conscripted two years earlier. So I barely remember him.
I did hear that he worked in an institute of archaeology or folkloristics...

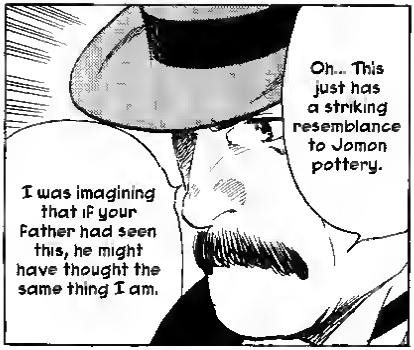


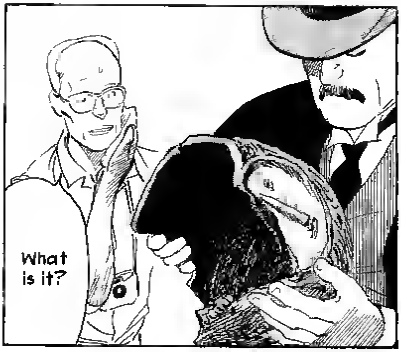


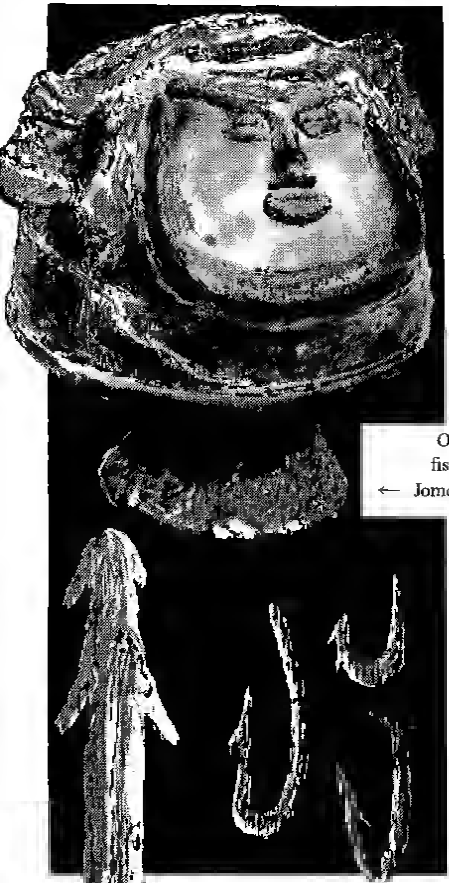


Are you alright, President... I mean, Mr Kawamura?
It's nothing... Phew, I may be a senior citizen, but I'm still... Huff...
The guide said that there's a small village inland...
Looks like there's a wind coming...
Thank you, Munakata.

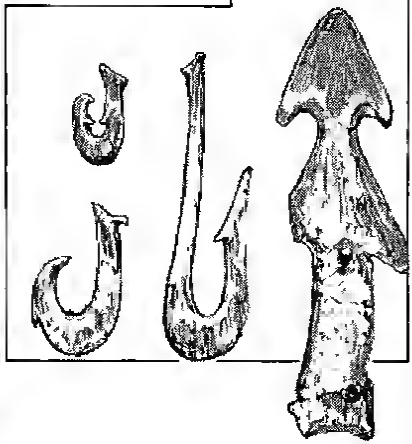

Yet another depopulated village...
Most of the houses are abandoned. The wave of civilization must have swept over them, and most of the young people must have left for the main island of New Guinea.
I just can't communicate with them. I even tried the smattering of Indonesian I know...

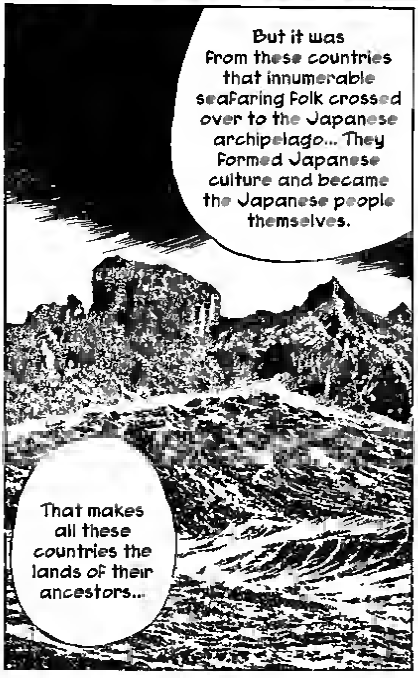

I was imagining that if your father had seen this, he might have thought the same thing I am.
Oh... This just has a striking resemblance to Jomon pottery.

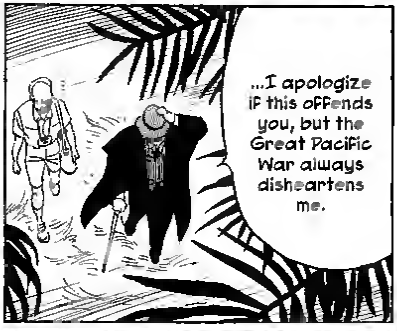


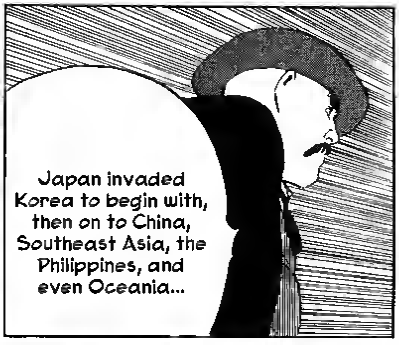


Oceanian pottery/
fishhooks/harpoons →
← Jomon period artifacts

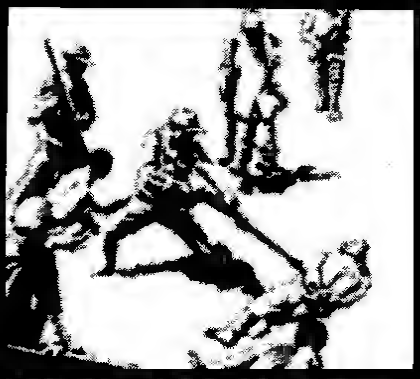


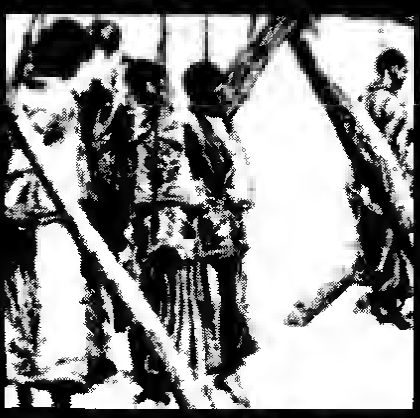

But it was from these countries that innumerable seafaring folk crossed over to the Japanese archipelago... They formed Japanese culture and became the Japanese people themselves.
That makes all these countries the lands of their ancestors...

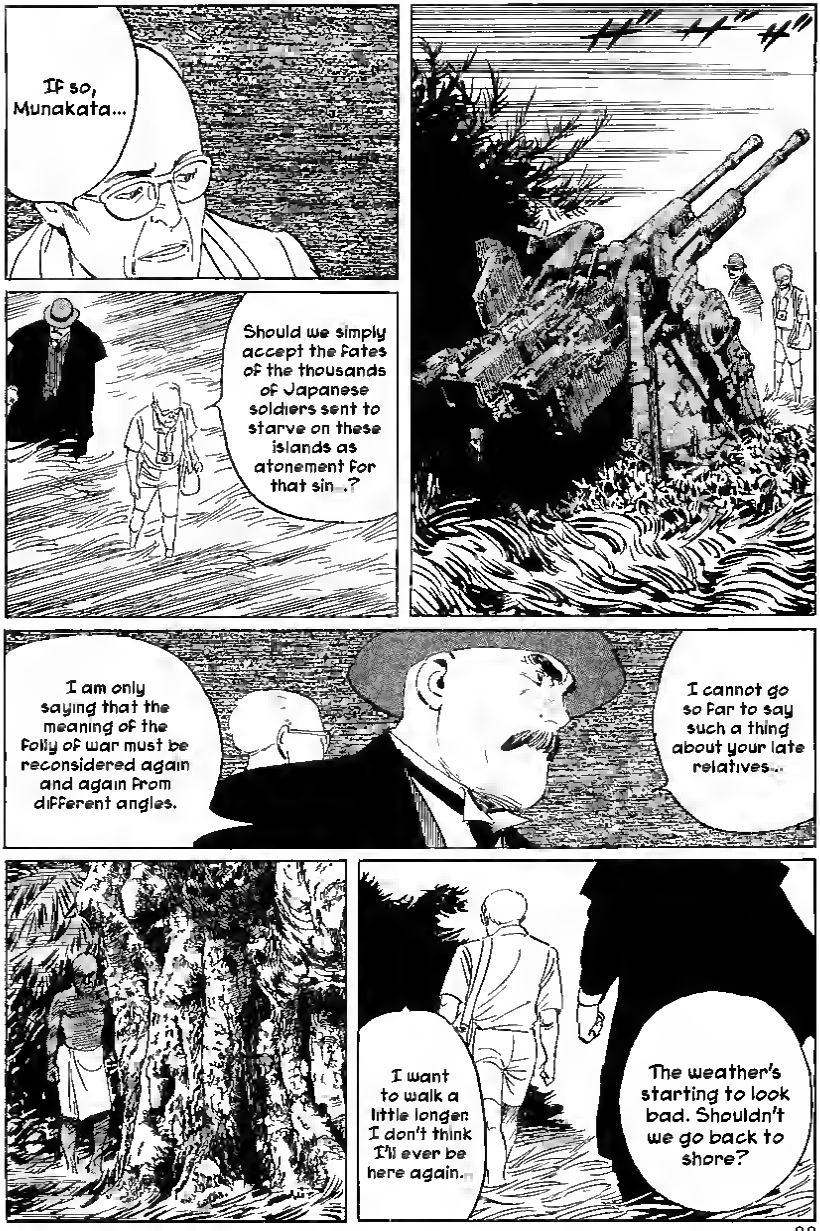

...I apologize if this offends you, but the Great Pacific War always disheartens me.


Japan invaded Korea to begin with, then on to China, Southeast Asia, the Philippines, and even Oceania...

What an abominable sin that was...!
This would mean that the Japanese were trampling their own homelands underfoot and overrunning their own brothers by blood...!

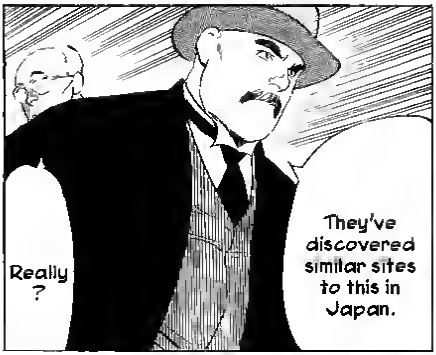


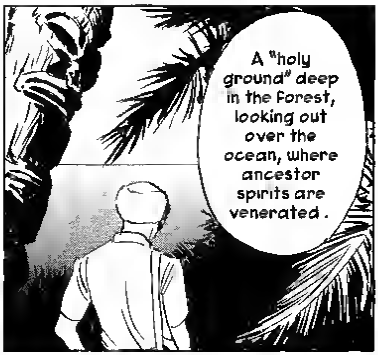


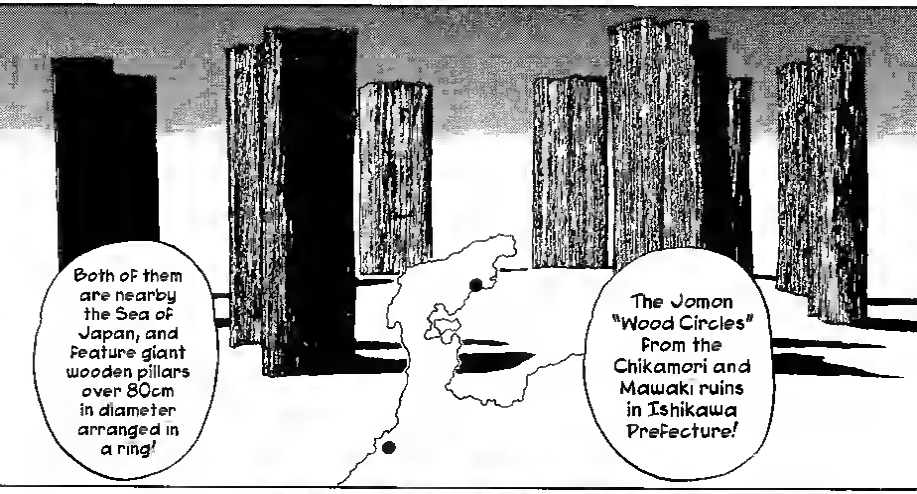

If so, Munakata...
Should we simply accept the fates of the thousands of Japanese soldiers sent to starve on these islands as atonement for that sin...?
I am only saying that the meaning of the folly of war must be reconsidered again and again from different angles.
I cannot go so far to say such a thing about your late relatives...
I want to walk a little longer. I don't think I'll ever be here again.
The weather's starting to look bad. Shouldn't we go back to shore?

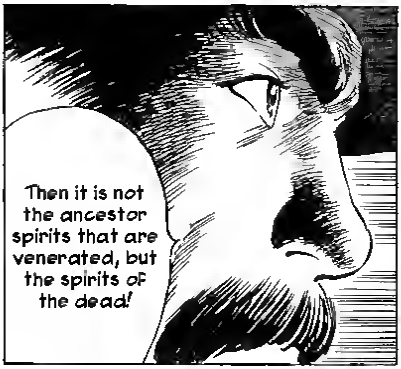
W...WOW! I THINK WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO SHORE!

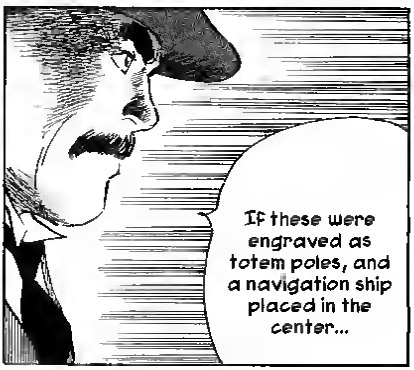
Totem poles...?
I know that the people of New Guinea erected Telum ancestor figures, but not large wooden pillars like this ..
Not to mention that they form a ring!
Looks like a ship for ocean navigation.
This may have been the ship their ancestors came across on...

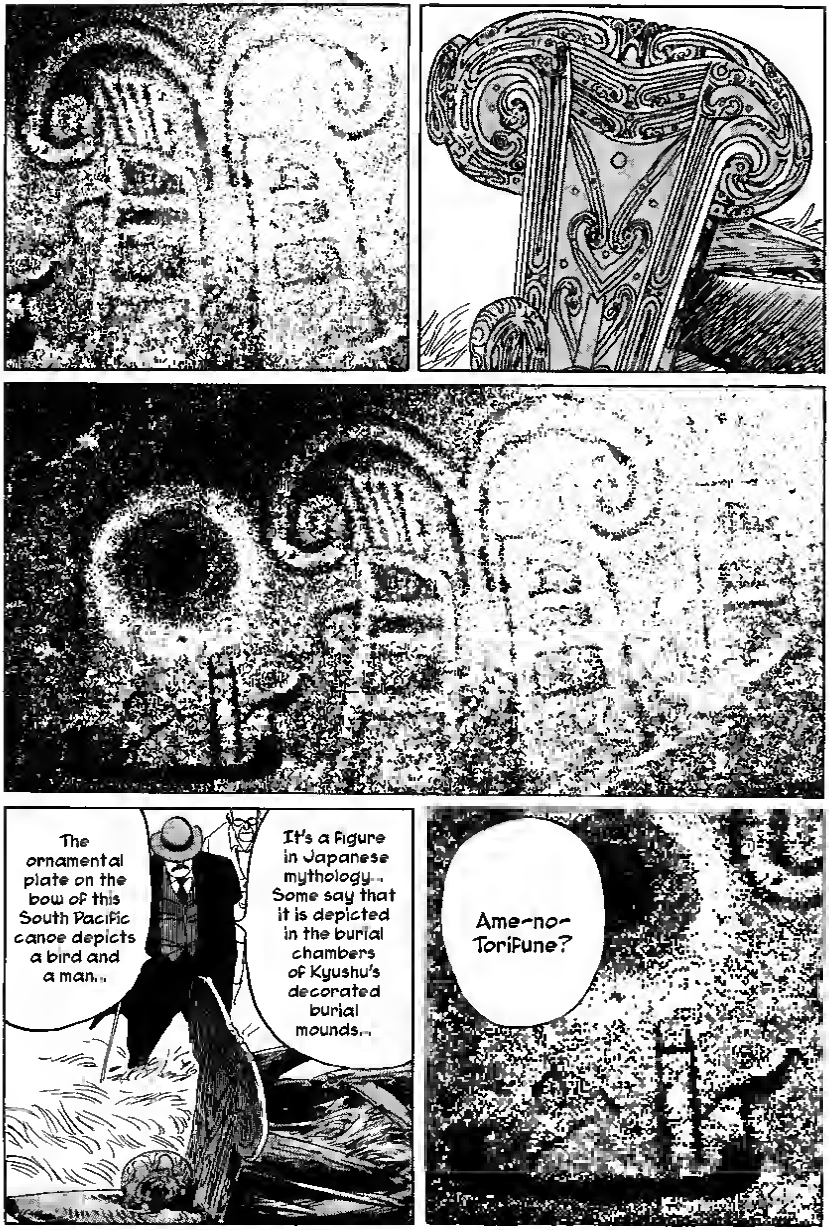

Really ?
They've discovered similar sites to this in Japan.

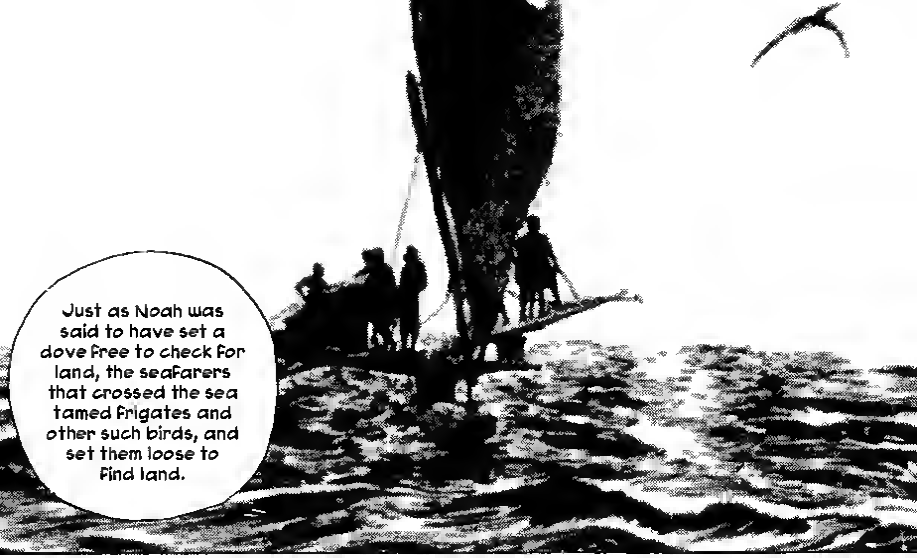

A "holy ground" deep in the forest, looking out over the ocean, where ancestor spirits are venerated.


Both of them are nearby the Sea of Japan, and feature giant wooden pillars over 80cm in diameter arranged in a ring!
The Jomon "Wood Circles" from the Chikamori and Mawaki ruins in Ishikawa Prefecture!

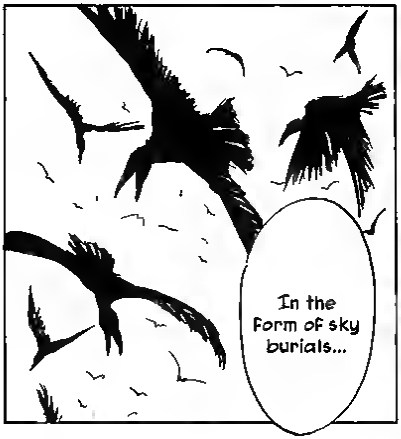

Then it is not the ancestor spirits that are venerated, but the spirits of the dead!

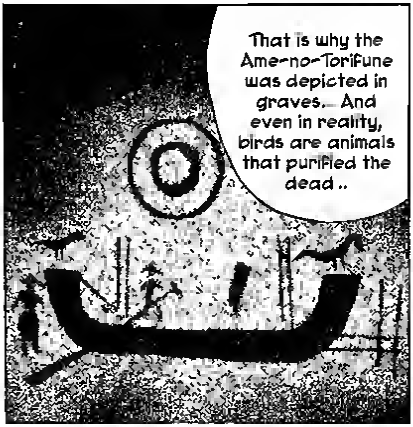

If these were engraved as totem poles, and a navigation ship placed in the center...

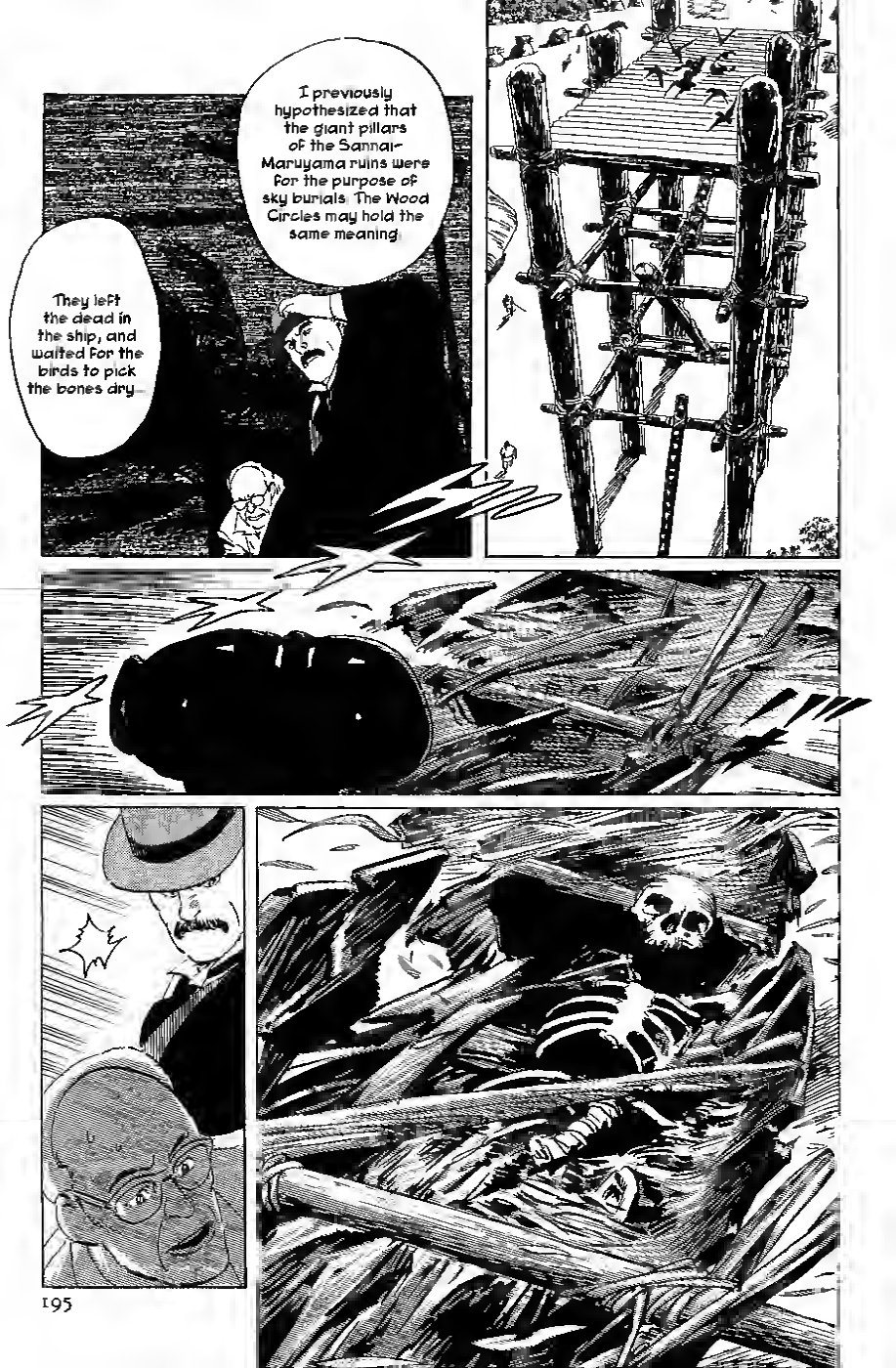

The ornamental plate on the bow of this South Pacific canoe depicts a bird and a man...
It's a figure in Japanese mythology... Some say that it is depicted in the burial chambers of Kyushu's decorated burial mounds...
Ame-no-Torifune?


Just as Noah was said to have set a dove free to check for land, the seafarers that crossed the sea tamed frigates and other such birds, and set them loose to find land.

The ship became a vessel to transport the dead, and the birds would guide their souls...
When the seafarers began to settle on land, they may have passed this down as a ritual for burying the dead.
The bird leads the ship...


In the form of sky burials...

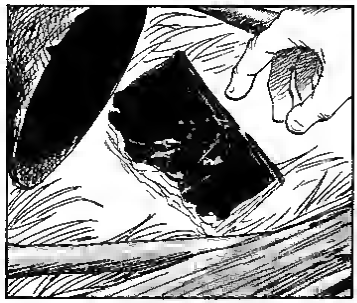

That is why the Ame-no-Torifune was depicted in graves... And even in reality, birds are animals that purified the dead ..

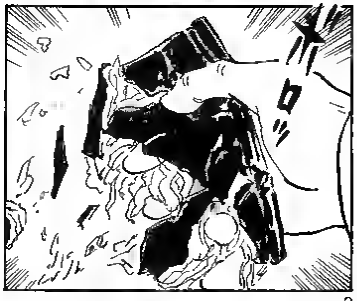

I previously hypothesized that the giant pillars of the Sannai-Maruyama ruins were for the purpose of sky burials. The Wood Circles may hold the same meaning.
They left the dead in the ship, and waited for the birds to pick the bones dry.

KAA-MULA SHILO!!
KAA-MULA... KAA-MULA!
YOU SAID KAWAMURA SHIRO, RIGHT!? IS THAT HIM...!?
D...DID YOU SAY KAWAMURA SHIRO!?

AH...
AHHHH HHHHH! AHHHH HHHHH HHHH HHH!
AHHHH HHHHH HHHH! AHHHH HHHHH HHHH!

FATHER!!
FATHER... IT'S ME, MANABU!

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HEY! ARE YOU ALRIGHT!?
MR. MUNAKATA!
GO OVER THERE! IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS HERE!

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EEEE
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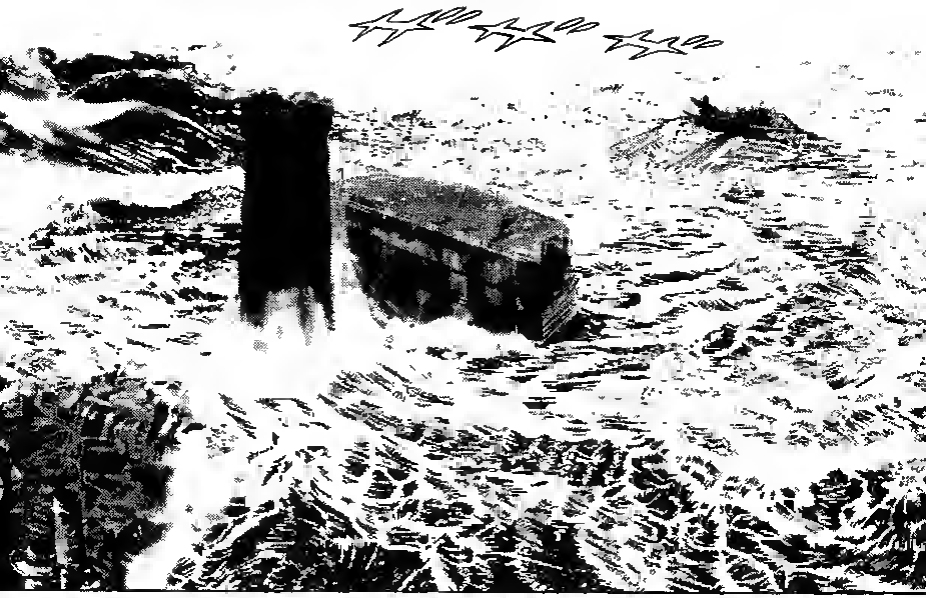
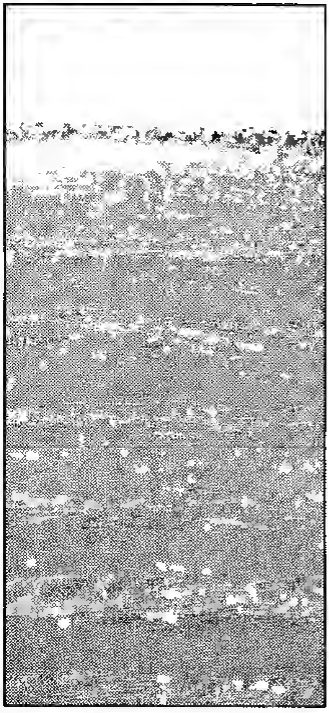
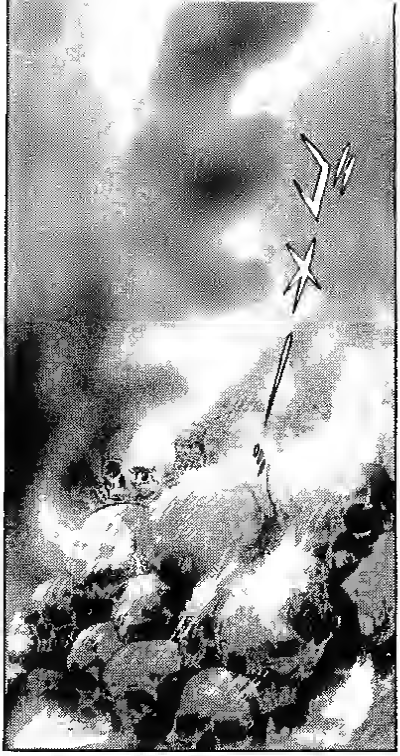
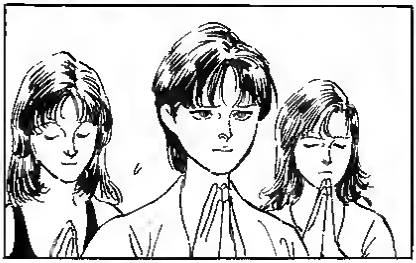
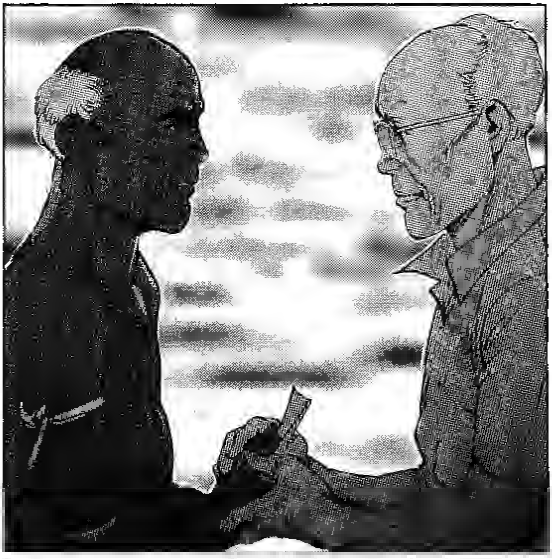


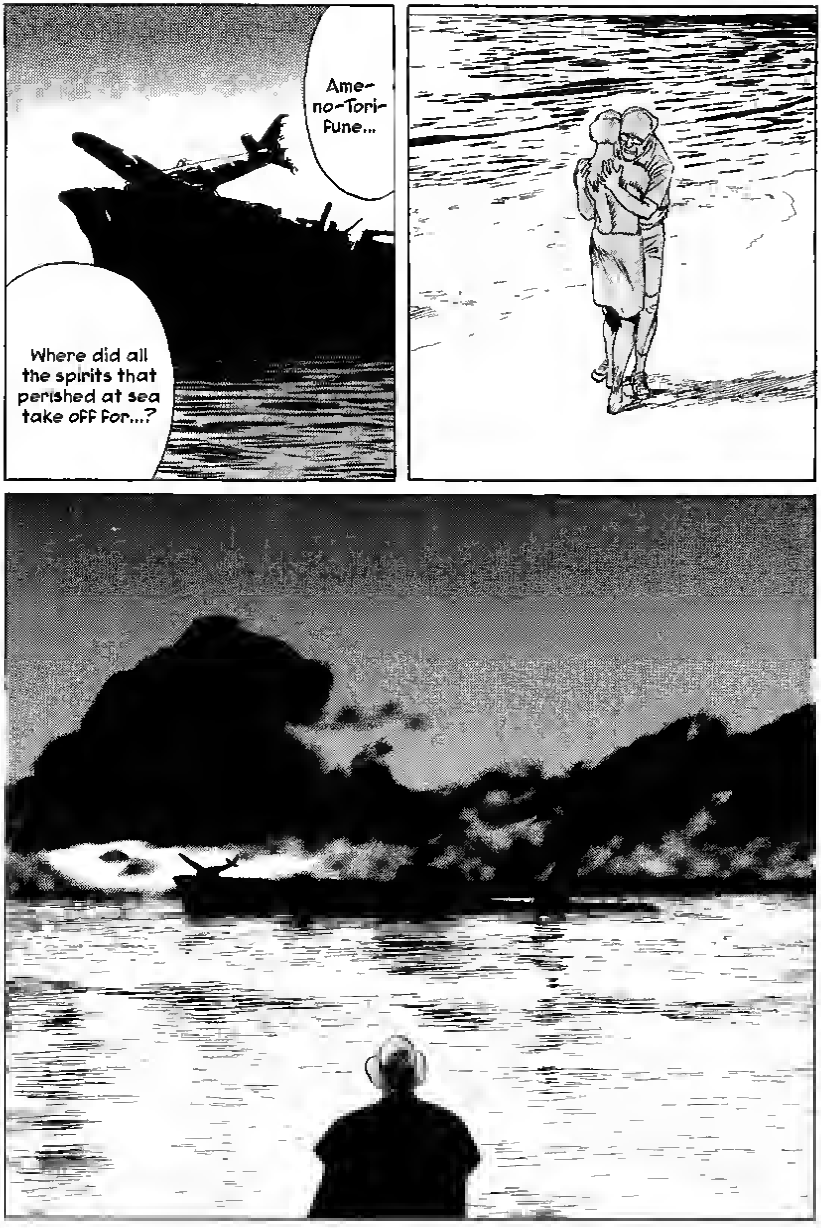








.. Thank you, Bigarole. Now I can bring my father back to Japan. Thank you.

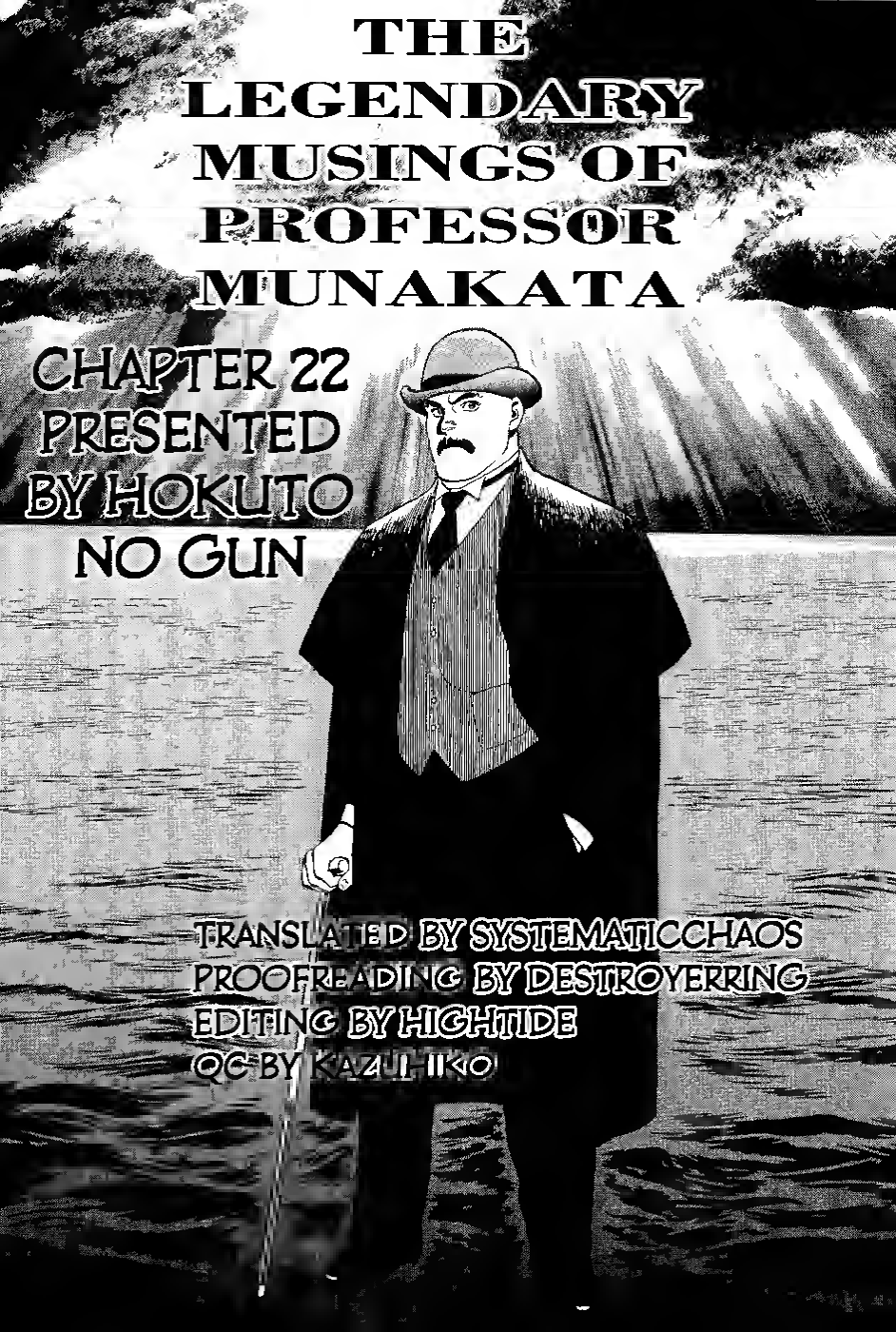


File 22: Land of the Ancestors – END

THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

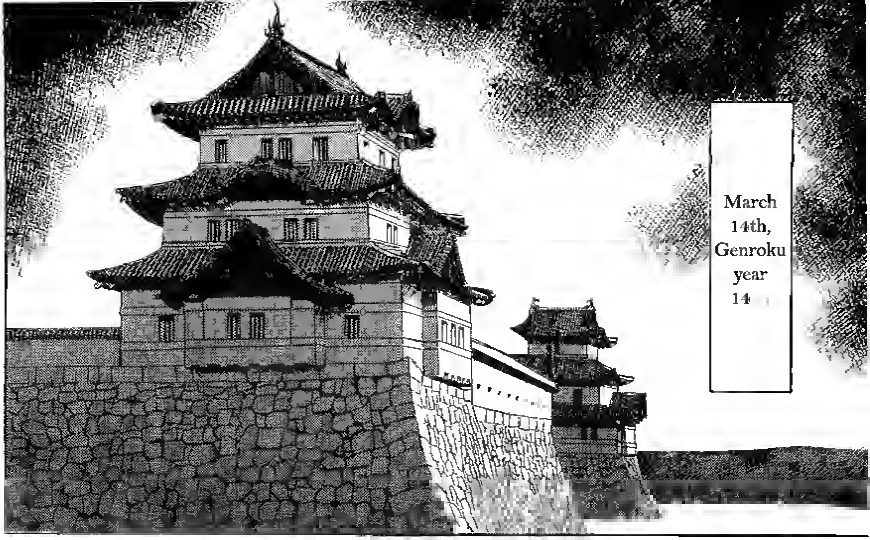
CHAPTER 22

PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN

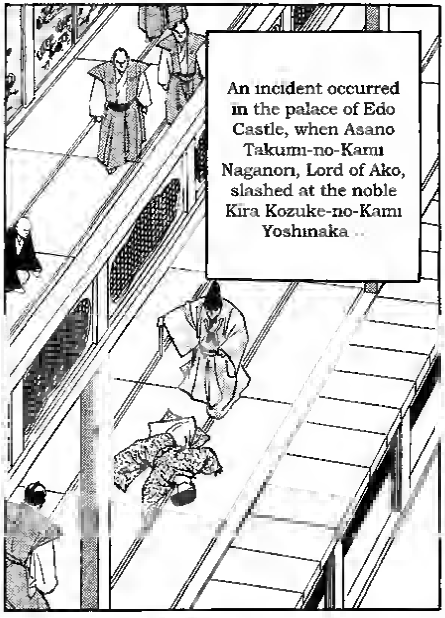


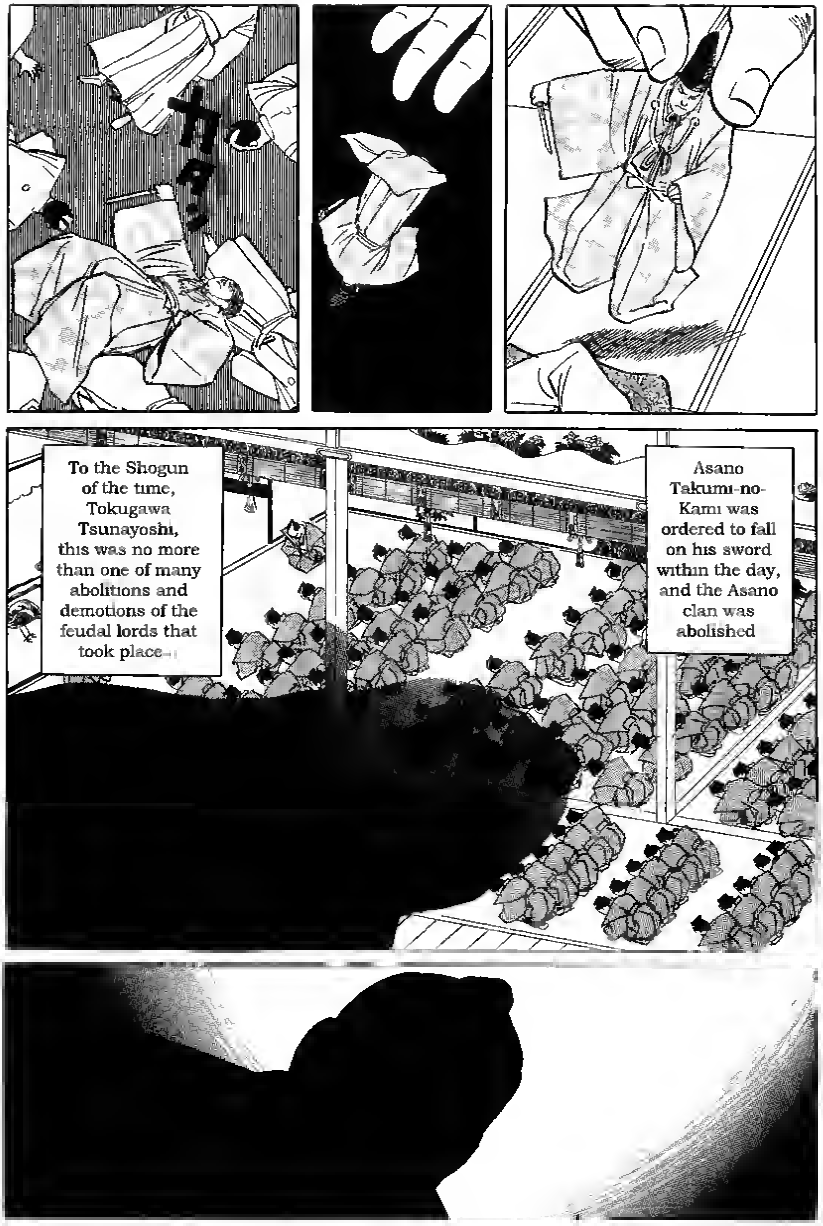
TRANSLATED BY SYSTEMATICCHAOS
PROOFREADING BY DESTROYERRING
EDITING BY HIGHTIDE
QC BY KAZUHIKO

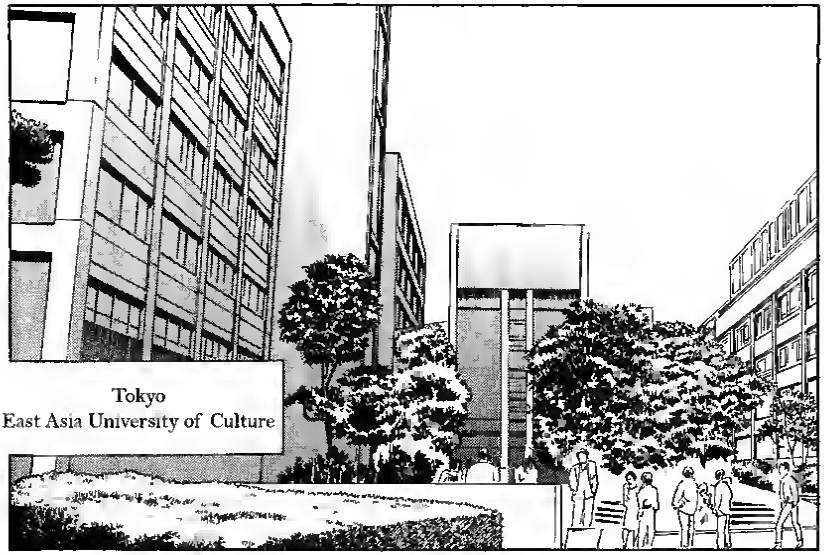
File 23: The Devil's Shotgun

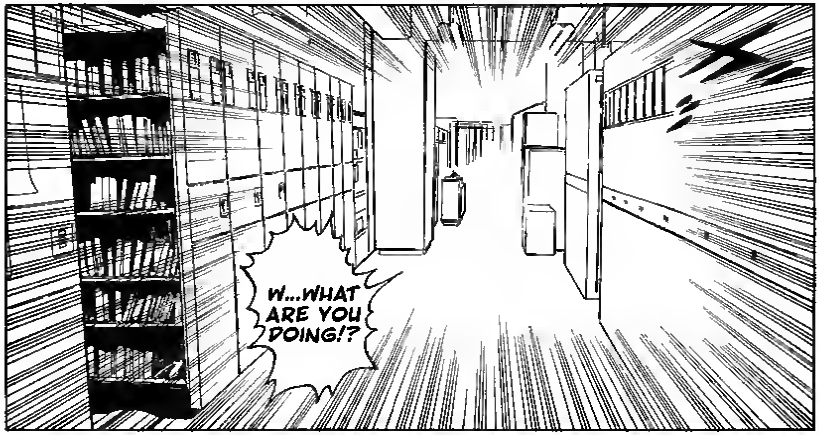

March 14th, Genroku year 14 ...

This was a tale of bloodshed that would incite the famous tale of revenge of the Forty-Seven Ronin


An incident occurred in the palace of Edo Castle, when Asano Takumi-no-Kami Naganori, Lord of Ako, slashed at the noble Kira Kozuke-no-Kami Yoshinaka ...


カタン
To the Shogun of the time, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, this was no more than one of many abolitions and demotions of the feudal lords that took place—
Asano Takumi-no-Kami was ordered to fall on his sword within the day, and the Asano clan was abolished


Tokyo
East Asia University of Culture


W...WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

EEK! H... HELP ME!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GET AWAY WITH THIS, SHIONO!
GET BACK HERE, KORA!!
STOP THIS, MR. SHIONO!
LET ME GO! THAT BAS-TARD'S...

I see. So Shiono's resigned...
We've been helping Assistant Professor Shiono prepare his new thesis, as his assistants.
It was on the theme of the fifth Shogun of the Genroku period, Tokugawa Tsunayoshi.
But then Professor Kora said...
I've read your abstract, and I simply can't let you publish it as it is.

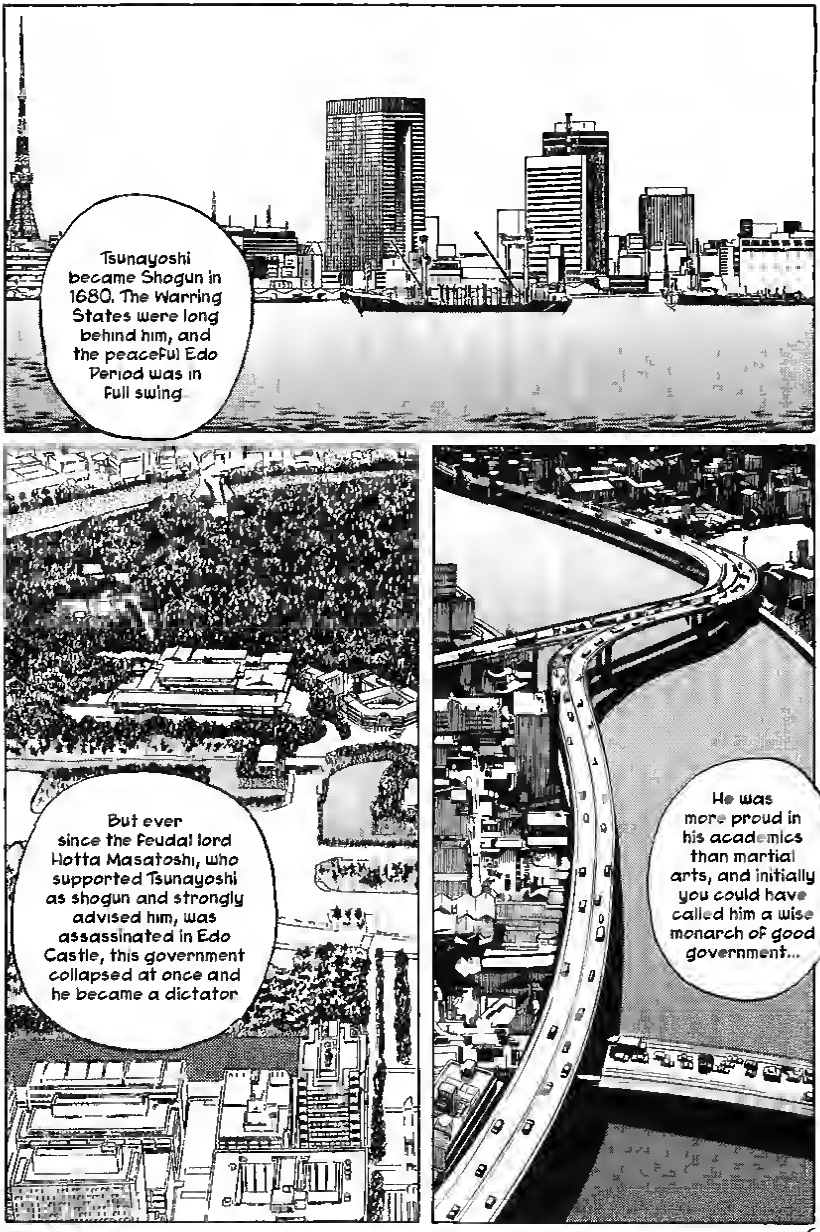
You know that I've studied Tsunayoshi's reign for years, don't you?
His personality may have been somewhat eccentric, but not to the extent of abnormality. I think he was a highly intelligent shogun that strengthened the authority of the shogunate.
W...Why not? Tokugawa Tsunayoshi was a shogun with an abnormal personality...
That's the only way to explain the policies of his day!
Tokugawa Tsunayoshi Became the Fifth Shogun in 1680.
During his thirty-year reign centered in the Genroku period, he was notable in Edo's history for repeatedly issuing his infamous animal protection laws, and the citizens would call him the "Dog Shogun" as such.

YOU'D BETTER BURN THIS THESIS IF YOU WANT TO STAY IN THE UNIVERSITY... IT'S ABSOLUTE RUBBISH!
I'D BE A LAUGHING-STOCK OF THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY!
I know I don't have any strong evidence yet, but I'm confident in my hypothesis!
Shiono... Do you really think an assistant professor can really publish a thesis that contradicts his professor's opinion?
It's the unfortunate pattern of the Japanese academic community that people care too much about authority and honor that they ignore and stamp out any new ways of thinking.
I can understand why he'd want to punch him out...
...But even still, Mr. Shiono tried to publish it by force, but it ended up stifled by the Professor's pressure...

We want to find some strong evidence, complete the thesis, and get back at Professor Kora!
Mr. Shiono is on probation, so we have to act on our own.
But what do you want a folklorist like me to do about it?
We want you to help us!
We talked it over, and we decided that the only way to do that is to rely on Professor Munakata's insight, which Mr. Shiono always admired!
Sounds like revenge to me...
S... Sure.
Do you want one? They're rice crackers from Harimaya. And they're quite delicious.

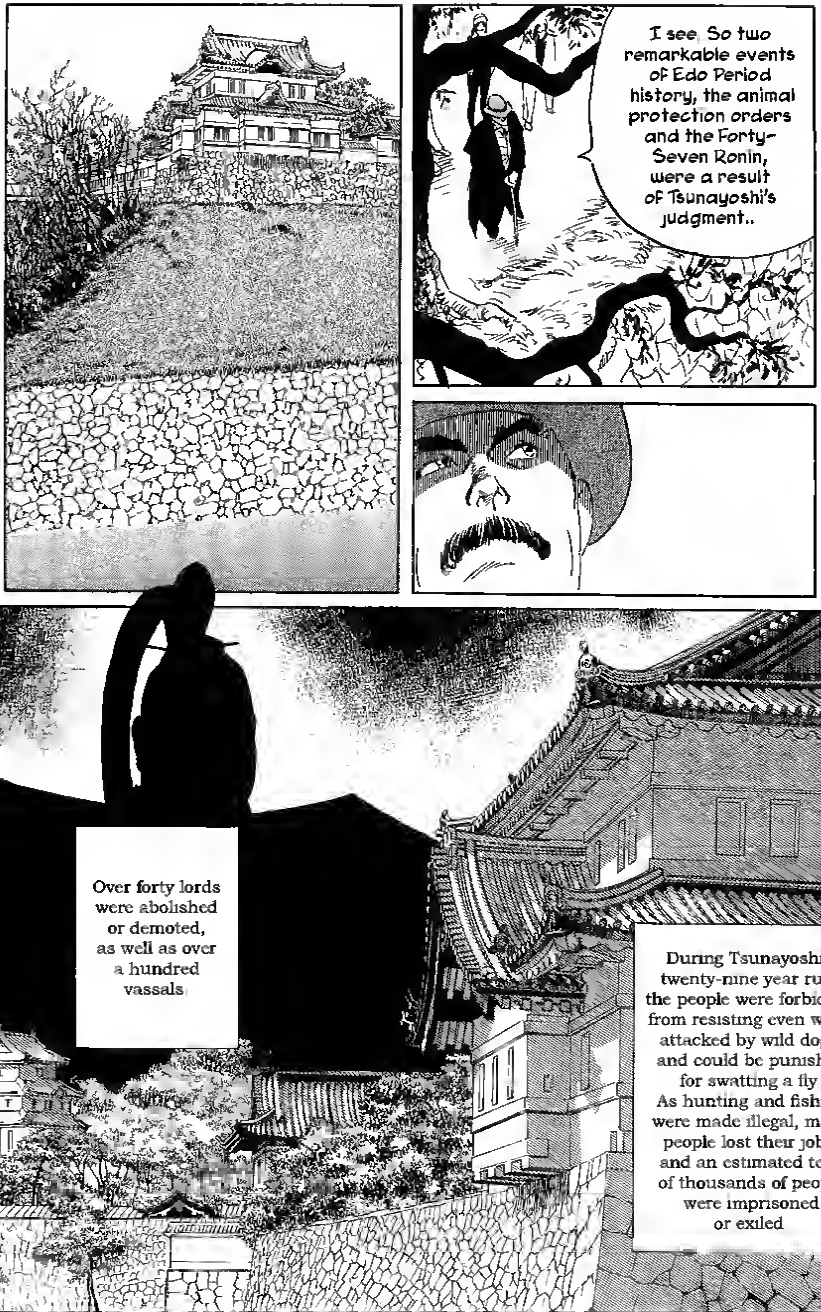
Muna-
kata!
Well, if it isn't President Tateba-yashi
What's your schedule like tonight? I've just been appointed as President starting this spring, so I'm inviting all the professors to a social gathering on this occasion.
Thank you, but I already have plans.
I see. That's a shame... You'll have to join us next time.

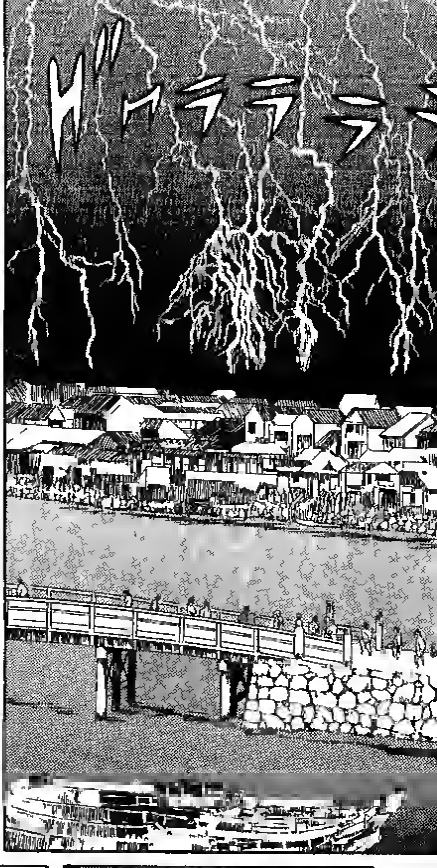
You really need to be more sociable, Munakata. You're better off being in the president's good graces...
Academic cliques... Hmpf!
Modern world history is beyond my expertise, but I'll help you to the best of my ability.
It'll be far more enjoyable than drinking with them.
THANK YOU SO MUCH!


Tsunayoshi became Shogun in 1680. The Warring States were long behind him, and the peaceful Edo Period was in full swing.
But ever since the feudal lord Hotta Masatoshi, who supported Tsunayoshi as shogun and strongly advised him, was assassinated in Edo Castle, this government collapsed at once and he became a dictator.
He was more proud in his academics than martial arts, and initially you could have called him a wise monarch of good government...

His animal protection orders, which may have originated from the fact that Tsunayoshi himself was born in the year of the dog, escalated from protecting dogs, to livestock and birds, until finally he forbade the killing of fish and insects.
While on the other hand, he abolished and demoted more lords than any other shogun in the whole Edo period.
I don't think he was just a nuisance! If the Shogun truly had a warped personality, that would be nothing but a reign of terror!
So he ordered the citizens to care for all life, even down to the smallest insects, but as for the humans, he imprisoned and unemployed countless. What a nuisance
There was another major incident that shook the foundations of Genroku society...
Hmm...

In Genroku year 14, in the hallway of pines in Edo Castle, as if unable to stand the tension of the era, Asano Takumi-no-Kami attacked Kira Kozuke-no-Kami!
The Shogunate forced Asano Takumi-no-Kami to fall on his sword and abolished the Asano Clan of Ako, yet Kira got off scot-free...
The Forty-Seven Ronin...
If only Tsunayoshi had given an impartial judgment, the sixty-four deaths of that assault would never have happened...!
Exactly. Due to this ruling pronounced by Tsunayoshi himself, Oishi Kuranosuke and the ronin of Ako would assault Kira's estate the next year...


I see. So two remarkable events of Edo Period history, the animal protection orders and the Forty-Seven Ronin, were a result of Tsunayoshi's judgment..
Over forty lords were abolished or demoted, as well as over a hundred vassals
During Tsunayoshi's twenty-nine year rule the people were forbidden from resisting even when attacked by wild dogs and could be punished for swatting a fly As hunting and fishing were made illegal, many people lost their jobs and an estimated tens of thousands of people were imprisoned or exiled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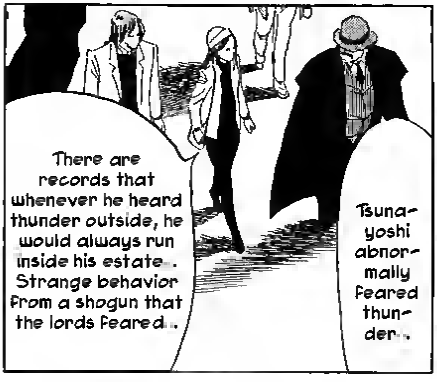
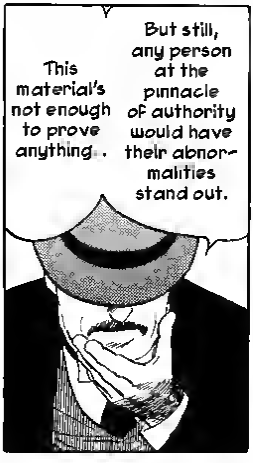

There are records that whenever he heard thunder outside, he would always run inside his estate... Strange behavior from a shogun that the lords feared...
Tsunayoshi abnormally feared thunder...

.....


This material's not enough to prove anything...
But still, any person at the pinnacle of authority would have their abnormalities stand out.

Almost like a child...

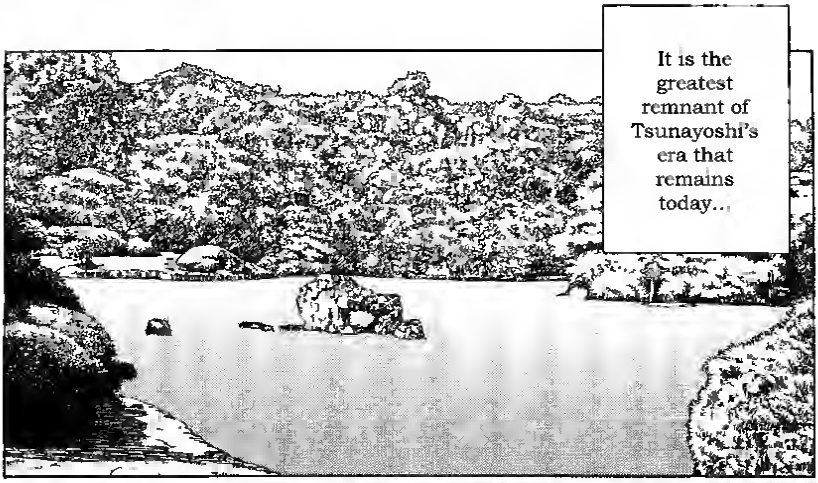
Tsunayoshi's misgovernments were continuously enacted by his associate, Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu.
Good grief...
He and his other associate made for your typical kitchen cabinet. Both of them were born in the Year of the Dog, and Tsunayoshi himself said that he only trusted those born in the Year of the Dog.
Rikugi-en...
Meanwhile, he also lined his own pockets with the profits, and invested this in the building of "Rikugi-en".
Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu, in whom he particularly trusted, made considerable profits through reminting coins, and used these to support Tsunayoshi's lavish spending.

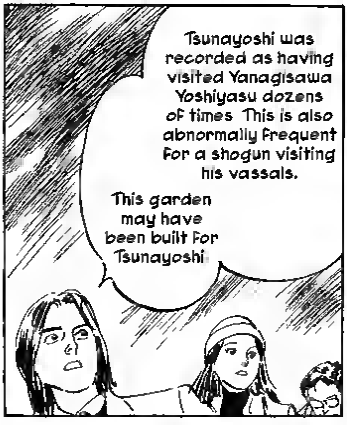
Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo
Metropolitan Area
Rikugi-en

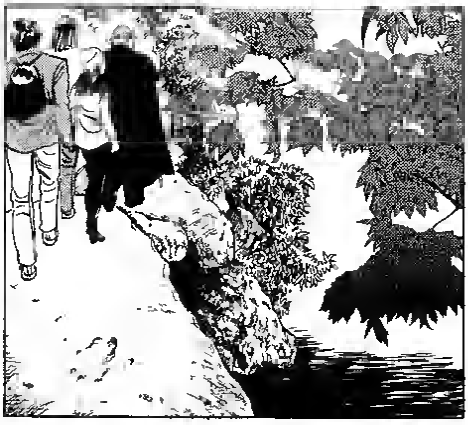
While there are no detailed records, some say that the ingeniously-constructed scenery expresses the six principles of poetry of China's "Book of Odes", after which it is named.

A stroll garden with artificial hills and fountains, built over a seven-year period on the forty-six thousand tsubo* plot of Komagome, specially granted by the shogun's adviser Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu

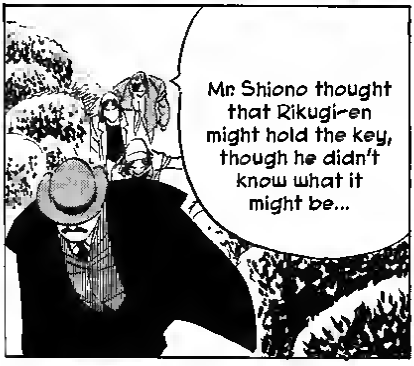
*One tsubo = 36 square feet

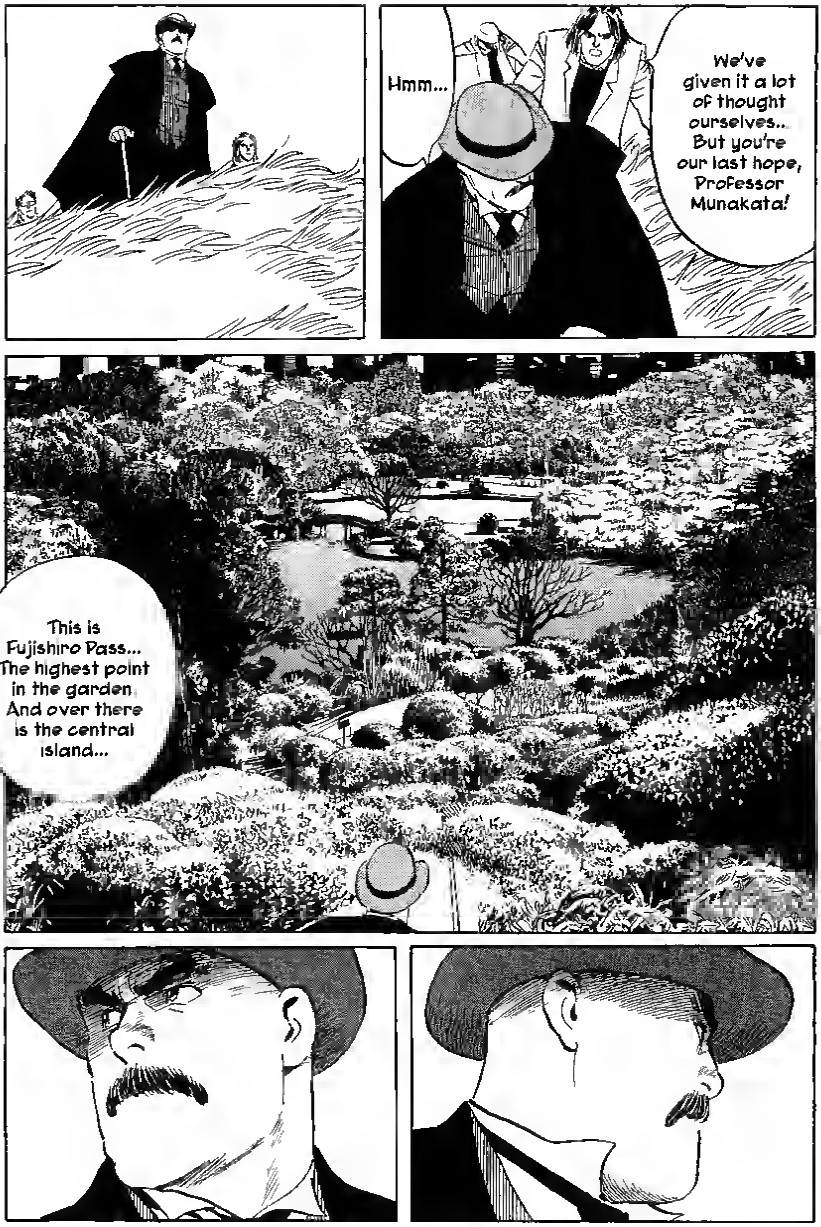

It is the greatest remnant of Tsunayoshi's era that remains today...


Tsunayoshi was recorded as having visited Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu dozens of times. This is also abnormally frequent for a shogun visiting his vassals.
This garden may have been built for Tsunayoshi

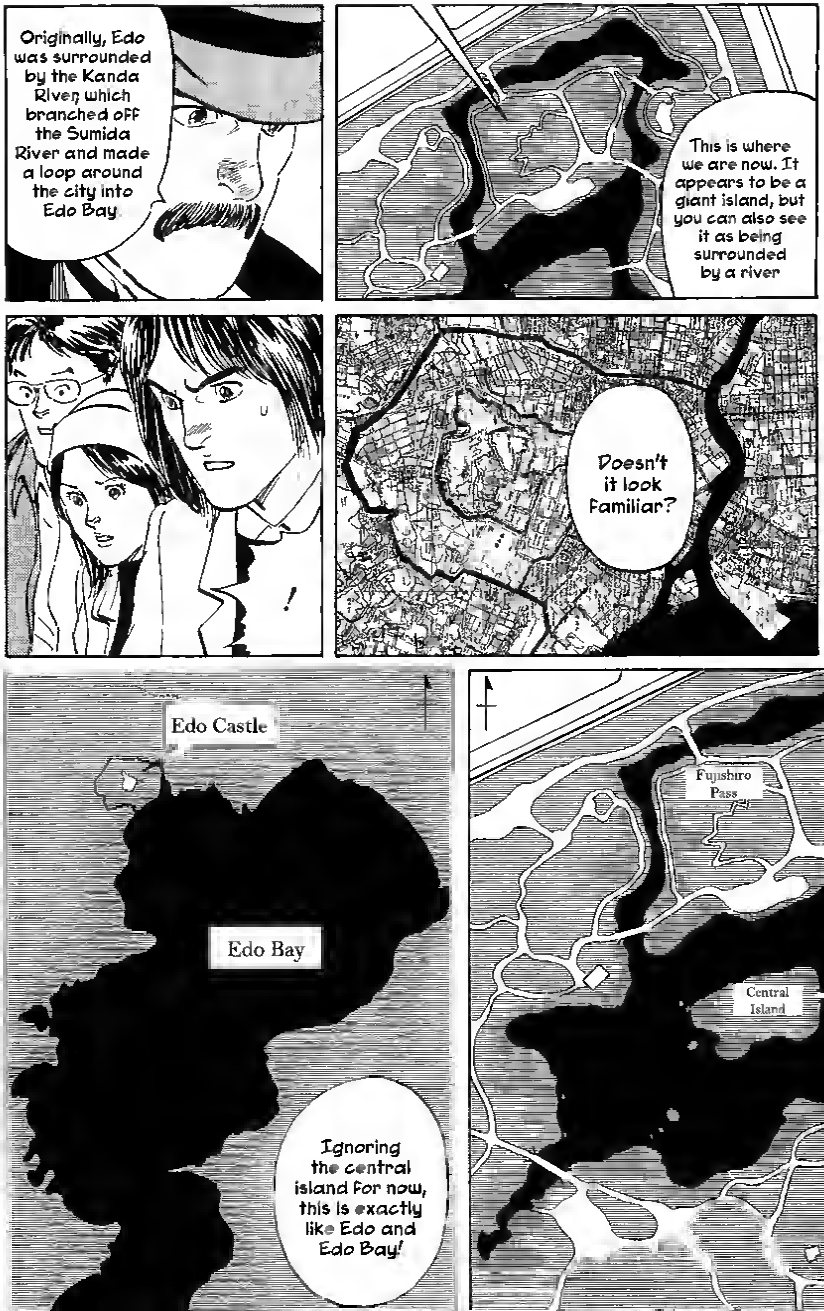


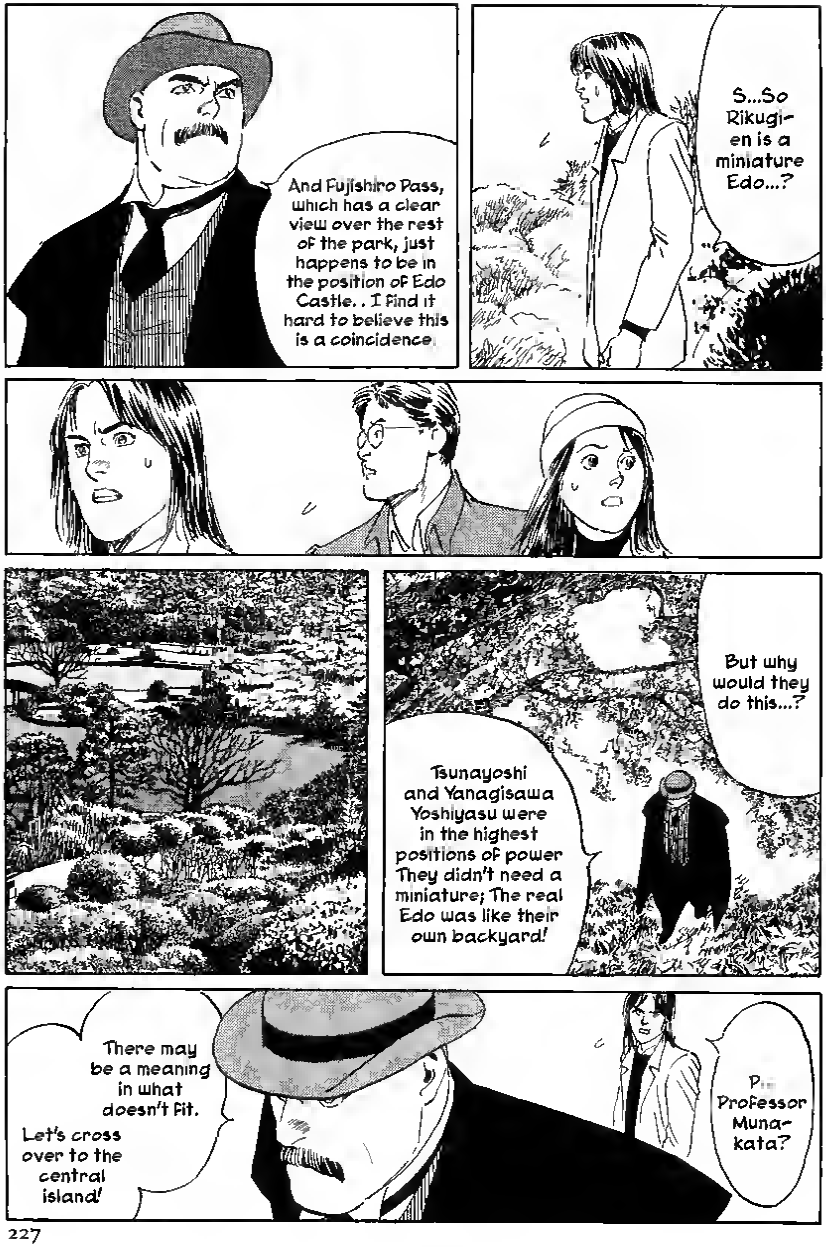
So you mean the evidence for Tsunayoshi's abnormality is in Rikugi-en...!?

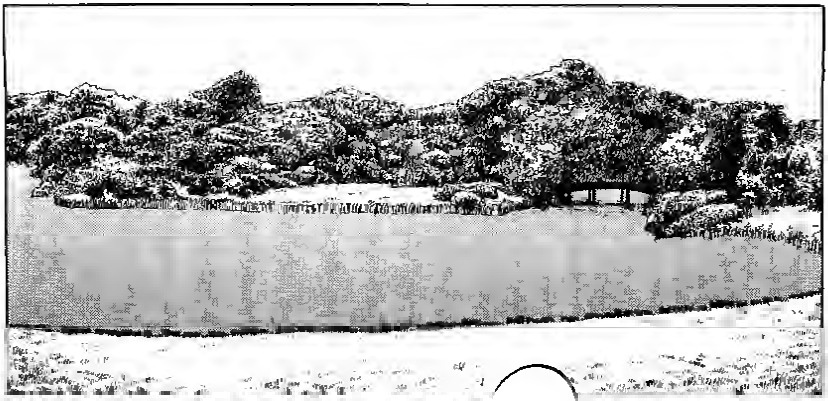

Mr. Shiono thought that Rikugi-en might hold the key, though he didn't know what it might be...

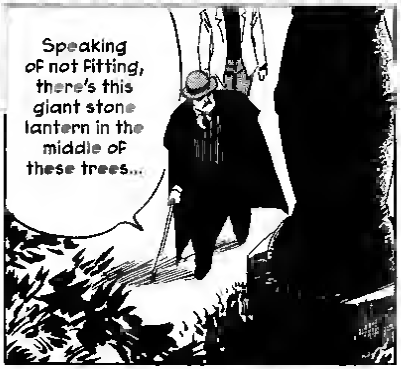

Hmm...
We've given it a lot of thought ourselves.. But you're our last hope, Professor Munakata!
This is Fujishiro Pass... The highest point in the garden. And over there is the central island...

Oh, sure!
Akaboshi, may I see the map in the pamphlet we got at the entrance one more time?
.....
Heher-heh... That's amusing.
Did you get something?


Originally, Edo was surrounded by the Kanda River, which branched off the Sumida River and made a loop around the city into Edo Bay.
This is where we are now. It appears to be a giant island, but you can also see it as being surrounded by a river.
!
Doesn't it look familiar?
Edo Castle
Edo Bay
Ignoring the central island for now, this is exactly like Edo and Edo Bay!
Fujishiro Pass
Central Island


And Fujishiro Pass, which has a clear view over the rest of the park, just happens to be in the position of Edo Castle. . I find it hard to believe this is a coincidence.
S...So Rikugi-en is a miniature Edo...?
But why would they do this...?
Tsunayoshi and Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu were in the highest positions of power They didn't need a miniature; The real Edo was like their own backyard!
There may be a meaning in what doesn't fit.
Let's cross over to the central island!
Professor Muna-kata?

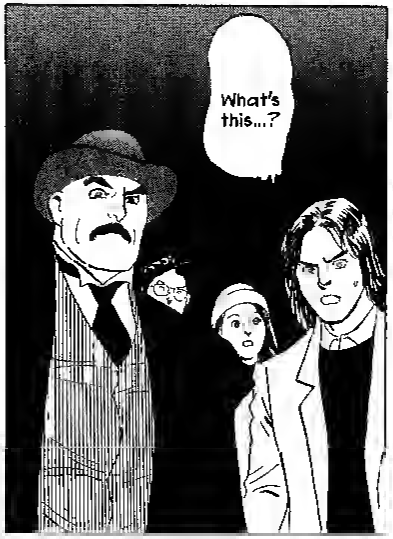


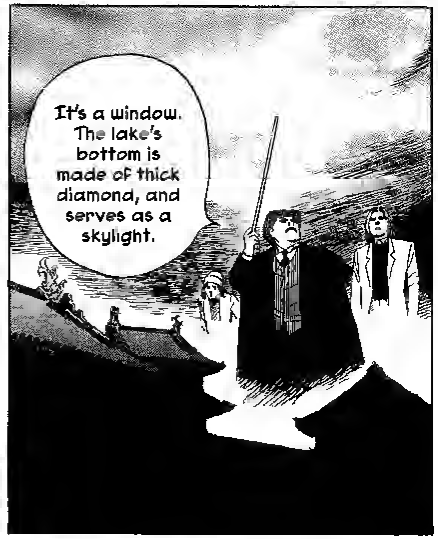

Speaking of not fitting, there's this giant stone lantern in the middle of these trees...

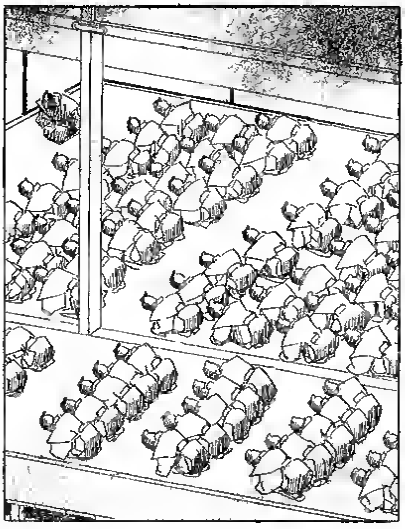
ズ

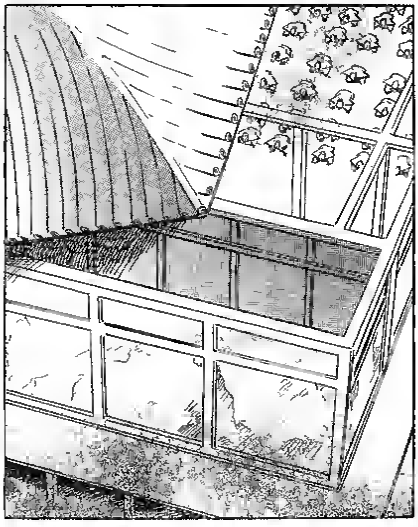
It's fairly luxuriant for such a small island...

W...Why is it so narrow? It's like a passageway for a child...


What's this...?


It's a window. The lake's bottom is made of thick diamond, and serves as a skylight.



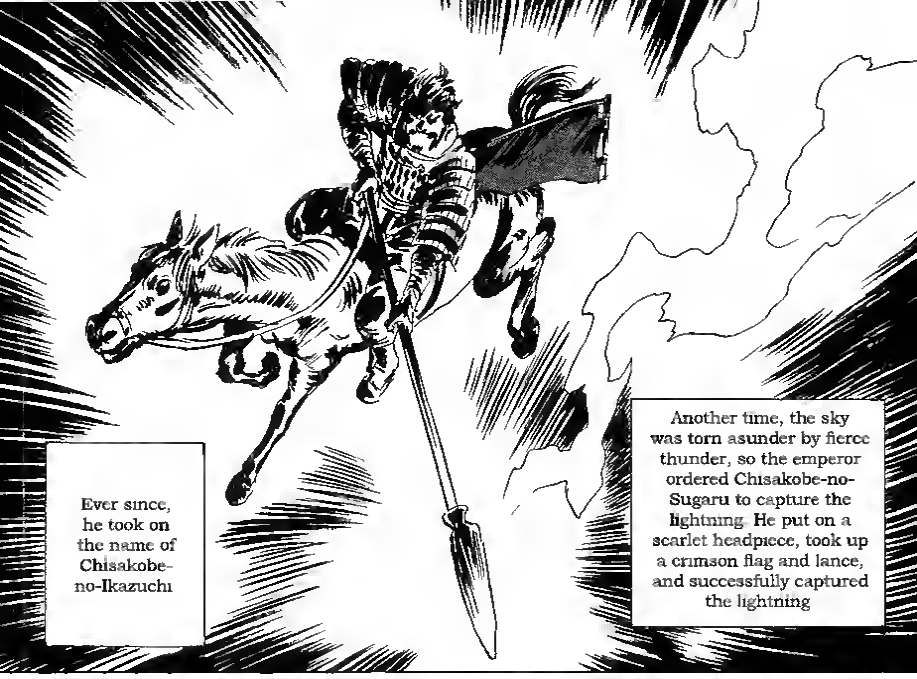


C...Could it be...
that this is Edo Castle. An elaborately-constructed miniature of Edo Castle...?
A miniature of Edo Castle!!

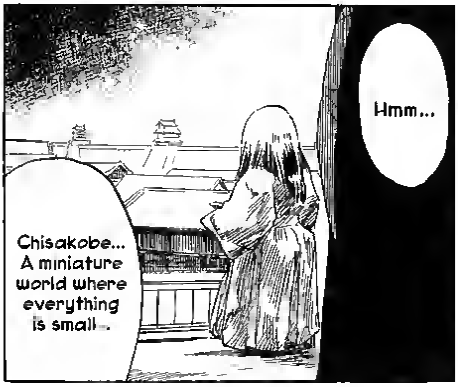
.....
A miniature Edo Castle under a miniature Edo...
It's almost like a playset. Why are they all so small...?
Maybe this was a playground for a child?
For either Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu's son or Tsunayoshi's..

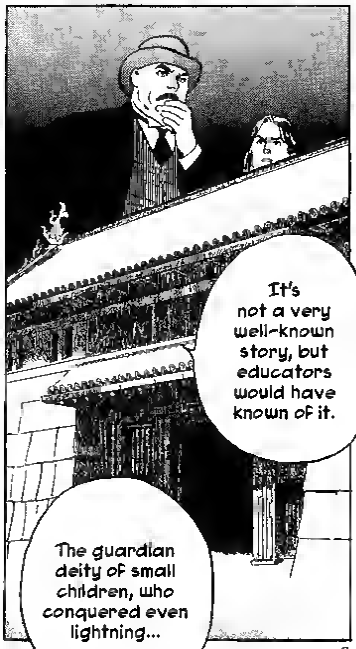
I have a feeling that this was all built for Tsunayoshi
Tsunayoshi was a highly cultured person, through his Confucianist studies and his knowledge of poetry. Rikugi-en, which was named after poetry, represented his public face
Tsunayoshi, at least, had no sons! There was one, but he died young. And if he did, why would he make a playground for him underground...!?
.....
But here underground may have been his other face.. A dark portion of Tsunayoshi's mind..
THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE DARKNESS OVER THERE!
A dark portion...?

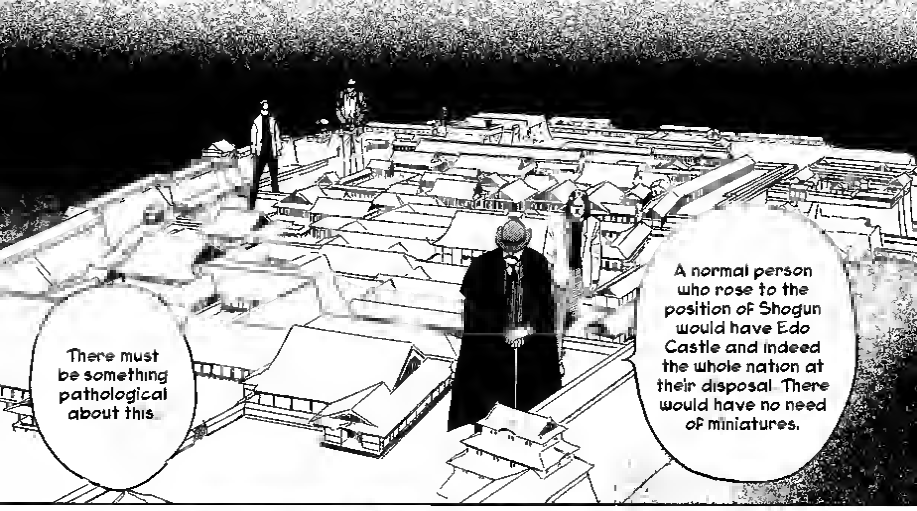
It seems to be treading on a thunder god...
There's some red color remaining on the head-band and the flag on his back... Hmm...
What's this...? A warrior statue...?
This is the only giant thing among all these miniatures...
This may be Chisakobe-no-Sugaru!
According to the Nihon Shoki and the Nihon Reiki, Emperor Yuryaku ordered a man named Sugaru to gather up all the silkworms in the nation, but he gathered up all the small children by mistake
The emperor laughed, and placed him in charge of their education Since then, he gained the title of Chisakobe
Chisa-kobe ...!?

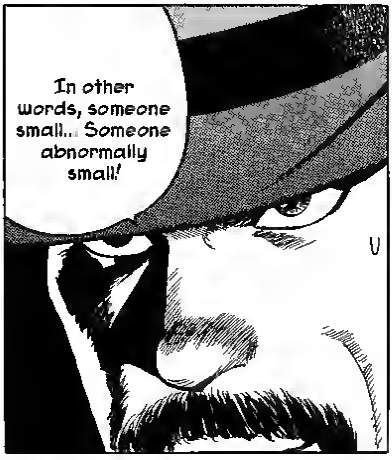

Ever since, he took on the name of Chisakobe-no-Ikazuchi
Another time, the sky was torn asunder by fierce thunder, so the emperor ordered Chisakobe-no-Sugaru to capture the lightning. He put on a scarlet headpiece, took up a crimson flag and lance, and successfully captured the lightning

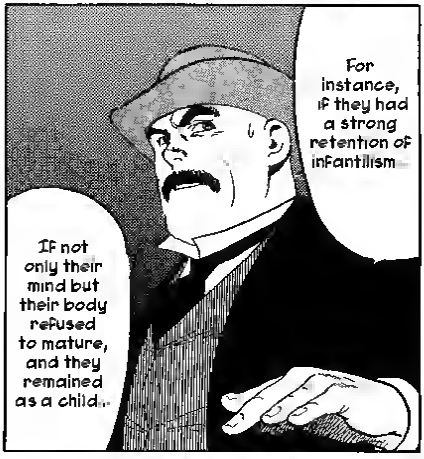
You mentioned that Tokugawa Tsunayoshi also had an abnormal fear of lightning...?

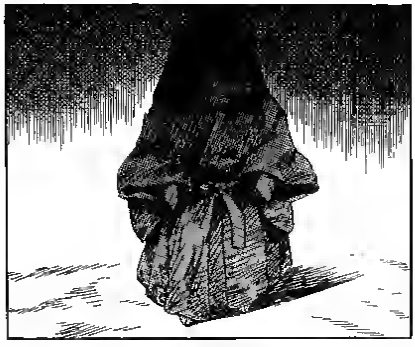

Hmm...
Chisakobe... A miniature world where everything is small.

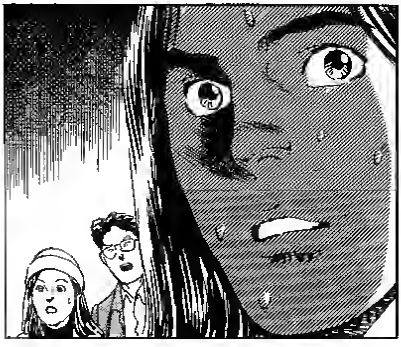

It's not a very well-known story, but educators would have known of it.
The guardian deity of small children, who conquered even lightning...

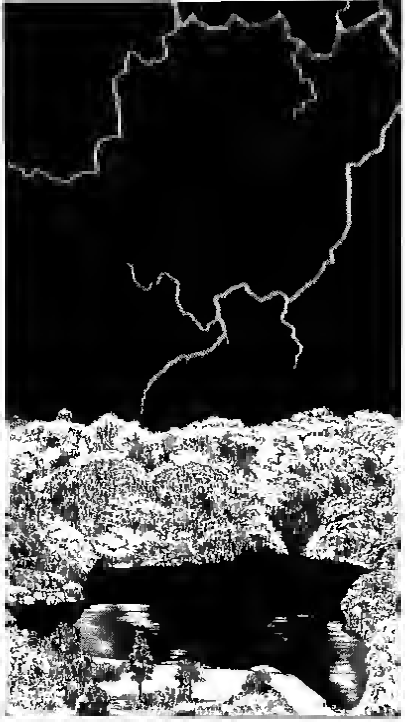

There must be something pathological about this...
A normal person who rose to the position of Shogun would have Edo Castle and indeed the whole nation at their disposal. There would have no need of miniatures.


In other words, someone small... Someone abnormally small!

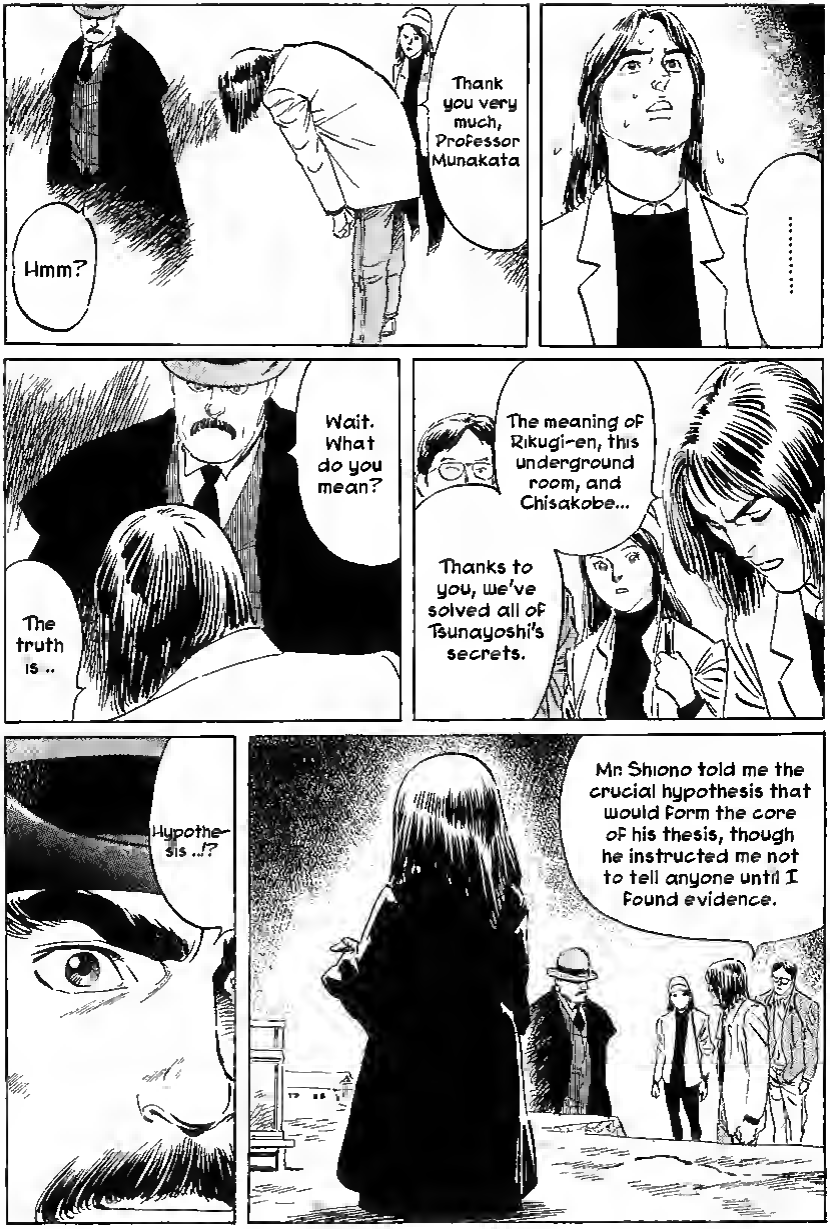

For instance, if they had a strong retention of infantilism...
If not only their mind but their body refused to mature, and they remained as a child...







ズシッ
ズシッ
This miniature world guarded by Chisakobe must have been the only place that made Tsunayoshi feel large.
He may not have been satisfied even by having above-average intellect or having life-or-death power over the feudal lords.
But this...

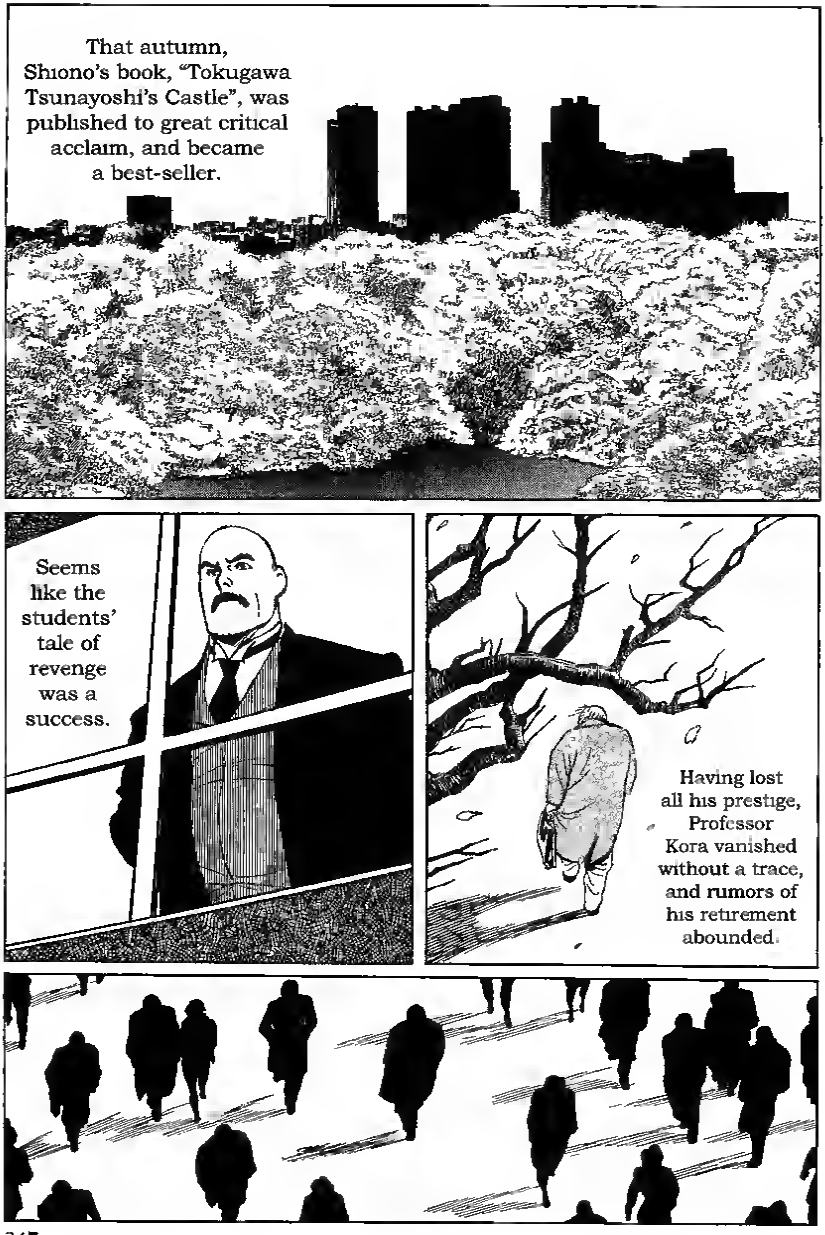

Thank you very much, Professor Munakata
Hmm?
.....
Wait. What do you mean?
The truth is ..
The meaning of Rikugi-en, this underground room, and Chisakobe...
Thanks to you, we've solved all of Tsunayoshi's secrets.
Hypothesis ..!?
Mr Shiono told me the crucial hypothesis that would form the core of his thesis, though he instructed me not to tell anyone until I found evidence.

Daiju Temple, Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture, the land of the Tokugawa Clan's origin... The family temple of the shogun lineage.
Almost all of them are around 160cm, which was the average height during the Edo period, but the problem was Tsunayoshi's...
The temple contains massive mortuary tablets for all shoguns from Ieyasu to the fourteenth shogun Iemochi
According to temple tradition, these tablets were built to match each of the shoguns' heights in life
It's only 124 centimeters...!

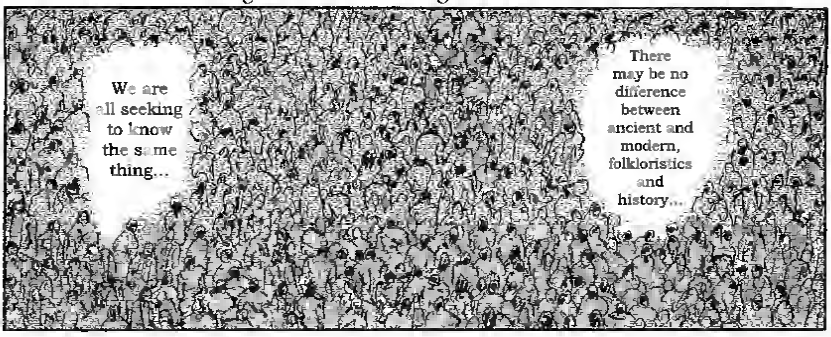
That's the height of a preschooler. Tsunayoshi stayed at that height until he died at the age of 63...
...And such a person became a despot as shogun...!
AIIIIEEEE EEEEE!
They call it either puerilism or infantilism.
Intellect aside, their childish personality does not mature even when they reach adulthood, and oftentimes their bodies are developmentally incomplete.

A...Ame-chanical doll...!?

ドカーン
……


That autumn, Shiono's book, "Tokugawa Tsunayoshi's Castle", was published to great critical acclaim, and became a best-seller.
Seems like the students' tale of revenge was a success.
Having lost all his prestige, Professor Kora vanished without a trace, and rumors of his retirement abounded.

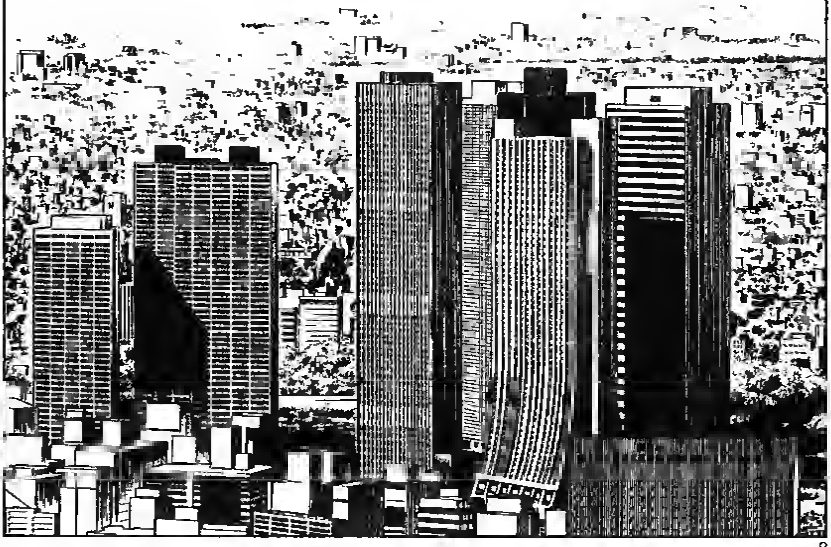
***The Blank History, by Tsunabuchi Kenjo, was partially referenced in the writing of "The Devil Shogun".**


We are all seeking to know the same thing...
There may be no difference between ancient and modern, folkloristics and history...

What does it mean to be human?

What intricate patterns are spun from the depths of infinite and mysterious minds, as they move, gather, and separate, and in doing so make up history?

That is what I want to know.



File 23: The Devil Shogun – END

❖おことわり❖

この作品はフィクションです。
実在の人物・団体・事件などには一切関係ありません。
また、雑誌掲載時の時代を背景に描かれていますので、
現在の国名、単位表記と異なる表現がありますが、
あえてそのままとしました。ご了承ください。

❖初出単行本❖

一九九八年十月三十一日　小社より刊行

解説

時空を自在に操る星野マジック

斉藤光政
東奥日報社編集委員

私はマニアである。もちろん、星野コミックの、である。マニアという言葉が適切でないのなら、フリークとでも言うべきだろうか。処女作の「鋼鉄のクイーン」（1975年4月）以来、星野さんが描く壮大な歴史ロマンに引き込まれてもう三十年近くがたった。

だから、「『宗像教授伝奇考』が文庫化されることになりました。ついては、解説を書いてもらえませんか」と編集者から電話がかかった日は、もう、うれしくて、うれしくて…。仕事が手につかないどころか、自慢したい一心で、職場中に触れ回ったほどである。

「やります、やります。ぜひ書かせてください」

私がこの執筆依頼を二つ返事で引き受けたことは言うまでもない。なんと言っても、少年時代からのアイドルにおおっぴらに〝ラブコール〟を送れる機会なんて、めったにあるものではない。私にとって、千載一遇のチャンスだったのである。

そんなに、一人で浮かれているおまえはだれだ？　と不審に思う読者も多いであろう。

私は本州の最北端にある新聞社の記者である。会社の名は「東奥日報」という。青森県をカバーする地方紙で、いわゆる県紙と呼ばれるやつだ。そこで、考古学などの歴史分野と米軍・自衛隊などの安全保障問題の二足のわらじをはいている専門記者である。

この文庫本を手にした星野ファンならご存じの通り、青森県には「国内最大の縄文集落」と呼ばれる三内丸山遺跡がある。そう、星野さんが作品の中で繰り返し取り上げているあの「歴史の教科書を書き換えた」大規模遺跡である。そして、太平洋側にはアジア最強の戦闘機部隊を抱える米空軍三沢基地がある。イラク戦争のバグダッド空爆で一番やりを務めた精鋭部隊で、きたるべき第二次朝鮮戦争でも主役を演じると目されている。

歴史と軍事。一見、奇妙な取り合わせにも思える二つのジャンルを欲張りにも担当しているのが私である。そんなずうずうしい記者のことだから、取材を口実にどうにか星野さんに会えないか、あわよくば直筆のレアな色紙をゲットできないものか、と長年たくらんでいたが、運良く、一年前にその夢を実現することができた。

「描き終わったら、もう、自分の作品は見たくないんです。恥ずかしいから。だって、思いつきで描いているんですから」

真っ白な雪のベールに覆われた札幌の自宅で、インタビューに答えてくれた星野さんは、ダイナミックな作風とは対照的に謙虚この上ない人物だった。しかし、彼の言葉にだまされてはいけない。考古学や人類学、民俗学をちょっとかじったことがある人間なら、星野

ワールドの背後にひそむ膨大な専門書の影を感じ取ることができるだろう。

スキーのジャンプ台を見上げる書斎で、夜な夜な歴史学、民族学の文献をあさり、丹念にメモを取り、それから浮かび上がるインスピレーションの断片を、「想像」という接着剤で丹念につなぎ合わせているのが星野さんであり、星野コミックなのである。

例えば、この第四集に収録されている「縄文の虎」。縄文時代の中期から後期以降によく見られる動物形土製品に、大胆にもシベリアタイガーを重ね合わせることで「狩猟民族・縄文人」の精神に肉薄し、そこから、現代のハンターの中に生きる山の神信仰の意味を解き明かそうとする。これは、まさに民俗学者の手法にほかならない。

また、オウム真理教事件をモチーフに、インドから日本にまたがる密教伝来の道を考え、ひいては現在の核関連施設が抱える潜在的な危険性を喚起させる「殺生石（せっしょうせき）」。犬公方として知られる五代将軍徳川綱吉の意外な〝秘密〟に迫る「魔将軍」。すべてが、過去―現在の時間軸を自在に操る星野マジックの独壇場である。

その中でも、真骨頂は「父祖の地」であろう。宗像教授は、一部の考古学者と考古フアンの間で話題になっているオセアニアの土器と縄文土器の類似性にインスピレーションを感じ、ニューギニアへ向かう。それは「モンゴロイドの道」をたどる旅でもあった。

私がこれまでの取材で得たインスタント知識によると、モンゴロイドは「スンダランド」と呼ばれる現在のインドネシア一帯で形成されたとされている。五万年前のことだ。その

揺籃の地で、モンゴロイドは北と南のグループにたもとを分かち、南に下った末えいが古代ポリネシア人となり、一方、北に向かった子孫が縄文人となったという。

宗像教授が旅したニューギニアは、古代ポリネシア人がスンダランドから東へこぎ出し、苦難の末にたどり着いた土地だ。つまり、現在のニューギニア人と日本人はか細いながらも、モンゴロイドというへその緒でしっかり結ばれた「遠い親せき」なのである。

こうしたはるか五万年前の〝血縁〟関係の傍証として、宗像教授はニューギニアの巨大木柱に注目し、三内丸山遺跡のシンボルでもある大型六本柱建物と一本の線で結びつける。そして、大胆に仮説を展開する。海を望む森の中で死者の霊魂を祀る施設、それこそが巨大木柱であり、亡くなった人間はその聖域で鳥葬に伏され、天に帰った……と。

だが、自らのDNAをさかのぼろうとする宗像教授の思索はそこで止まらない。「そんなルーツを同じくする太平洋一帯の人々に対して、日本人は第二次大戦中に何をしたのか」「自分たちの原郷を踏みにじり、同じ血を引く兄弟達を蹂躙したのではないか。これがどれほど罪深いことだったのか」と激しく問いかける。

これはまさしく、宗像教授という分身を借りた戦後日本人・星野さんの〝贖罪の旅〟でもある。感傷的に言うなら、星野さんは自らが描いた「2001夜物語」のラモン神父のように、人間が持つ業の深さを呪いながらも、そこに人類としての未来とかすかな希望を見い出そうとしているのである。

そして、「魔将軍」のエピローグで宗像教授にこう言わせる。

「歴史には、古代も近代も民俗学も史学もないのかもしれん。求めるものは、つまるところ、ただひとつ。人間とは何なのか。……わしはそれが知りたいと思う」

これは「われわれはどこからきたのか、そして、どこへいこうとしているのか」とつぶやき、南太平洋に楽園を追い求めた放浪の画家、ゴーギャンの苦悩にも相通じるものだ。

雪が間断なく降りしきる北の地で、片手にペンを握りながら、こうした苦行僧にも似た自問の作業を繰り返す星野さん。その彼のつぶやきにも似た言葉を代弁するかのように、民俗、人類、考古学の垣根を楽々と飛び越え、縦横無尽に活躍する宗像教授。この絶妙な二人三脚が『宗像教授伝奇考』の魅力であり、星野コミックの本質なのかもしれない。

その後の宗像教授はというと、第六集の「流星剣」の中で義経伝説を追って北海道からサハリンに向かった後、われわれファンの前からプッツリと〝音信〟を絶ってしまった。私はどうしても、彼の行く末が気にかかり、昨年の取材で星野さんに思い切って聞いた。

「宗像教授はこれからどこに向かおうとしているのですか」

「それは、これからのお楽しみ」とその時は答えをはぐらかされたが、宗像教授の出没先がやっと新作でつかめた。なんと、モンゴルから中国東北部へ連なる草原地帯だった。宗像教授はなおも「チンギス・カン＝源義経」説を大陸に追い続けていたのである。

これは、私にとって朗報である。実を言うと、私の新聞社は北京市にある中国社会科学院考古研究所と組んで二〇〇一年度から共同研究を進めている。格好良く言えば日中共同研究というわけだが、その舞台が中国東北部の内モンゴル自治区にある七五〇〇年前の未発掘遺跡だ。名前を「興隆溝遺跡」という。

三内丸山遺跡を代表とする日本列島北部の縄文文化のルーツを大陸に探そう―。そんな勇ましい掛け声で始めた国際プロジェクトだったが、三度にわたる発掘調査の結果、今では「はるか遠い文化の交流はあった」との結論に達しつつある。日本列島北部と中国東北部を結ぶ文化の道、いわゆる「北の回廊」は確かに存在したのである。

この「北の回廊」はくしくも、宗像教授が義経の影を求めて岩手県平泉から青森、北海道、そして大陸へ渡った「北の鉄の道」とも符合する。私は日中共同研究プロジェクトの担当記者として、この「北の回廊」を事前踏査も含めると六年間にわたって何度も旅した。これは、なんともうれしい宗像教授とのクロスオーバーである。

そんなこんなで、私は現在「中国東北部の遺跡に最も詳しい日本の新聞記者」とのお墨付きを中国社会科学院考古研究所から〝非公式〟にいただいている。

だから、宗像教授に言いたい。

「さらに、歩を進めて内モンゴル、そして中国東北部に立ち寄ることがあったら、私に連絡をください。なんなら、私が道案内しましょうか」と。

潮漫画文庫
宗像教授伝奇考【第四集】
2004年4月24日　第1刷発行

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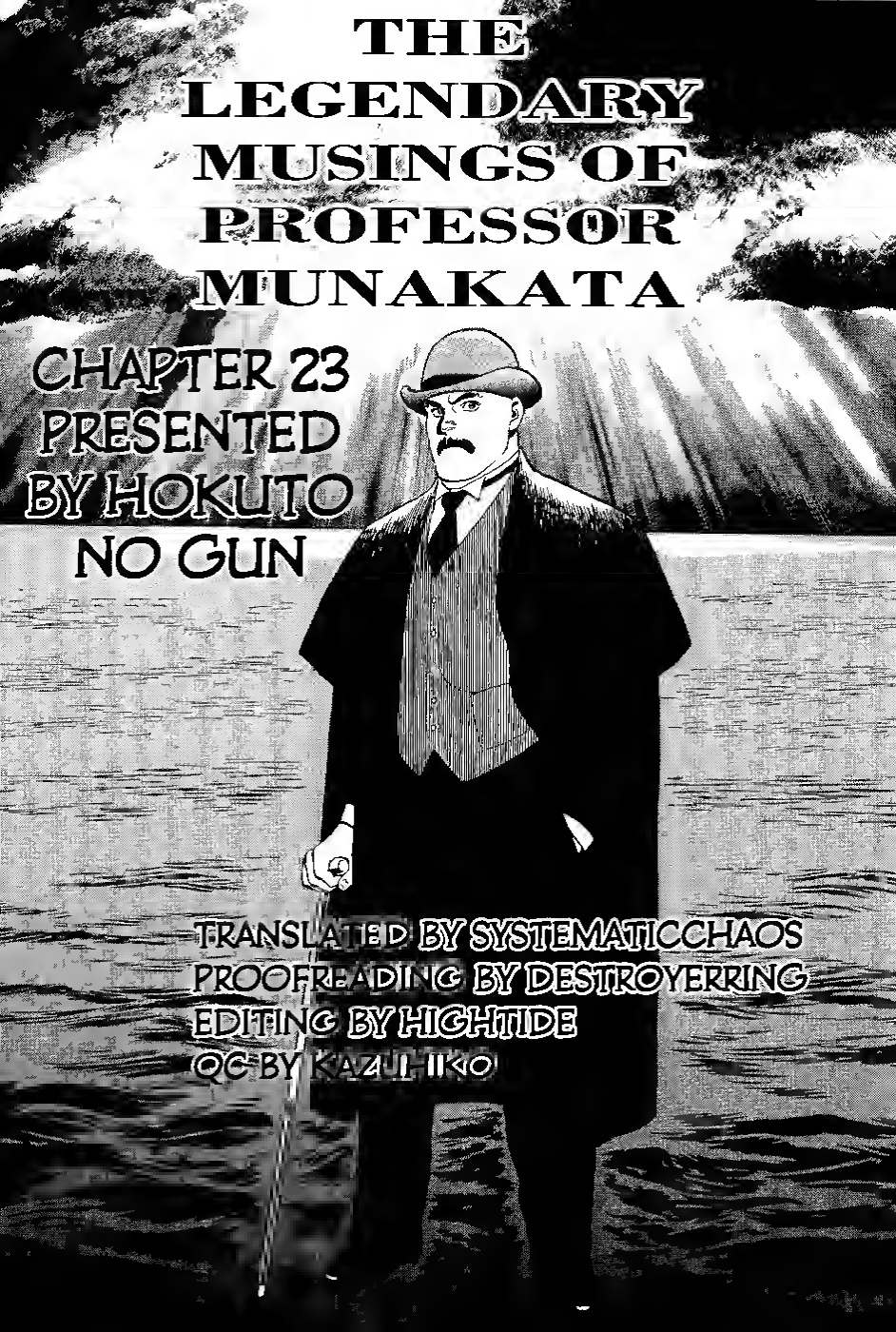
THE LEGENDARY MUSINGS OF PROFESSOR MUNAKATA

CHAPTER 23

PRESENTED BY HOKUTO NO GUN



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